THE CHRONICLES OF FAIRY LAND

BY

FERGUS HUME

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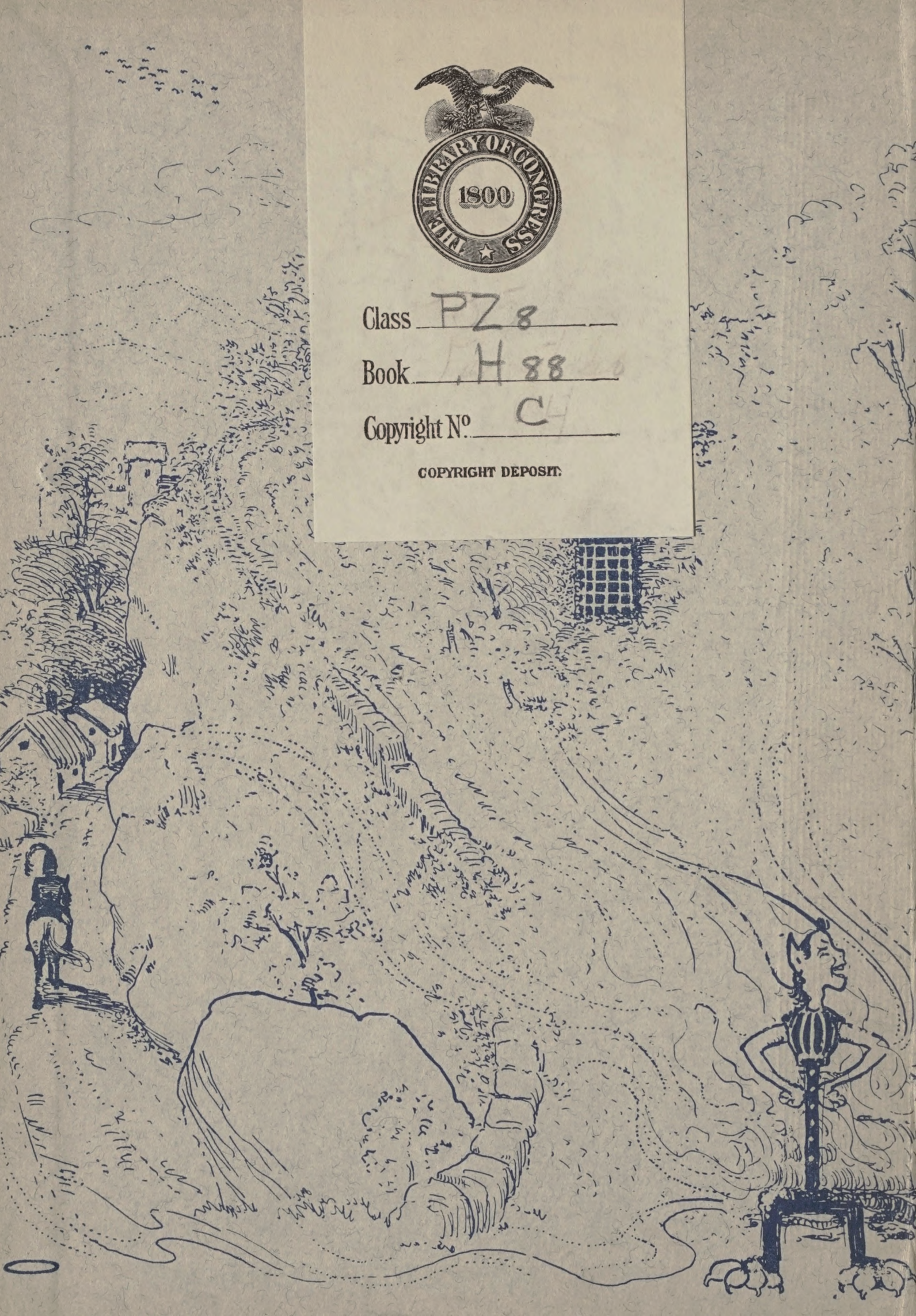

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A THRONE OF GREAT WHITE LILIES, UPON WHICH SAT THE KING AND QUEEN OF FAERYLAND

Page 104

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BY

FERGUS HUME

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY

MARIA L. KIRK

AND IN THE TEXT BY

M. DUNLOP

PHILADELPHIA & LONDON

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

1911

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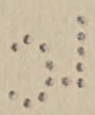
PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER, 1911



PRINTED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
AT THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS
PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.

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No.1

TO THOSE EARNEST STUDENTS OF FAERY LORE

JOAN AND JACK BURNETT

THESE STORIES

ARE DEDICATED BY THEIR FRIEND

FERGUS HUME

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A BALLAD OF FAERY TALES

I.

O'ER weary earth the twilight falls
  The sunset fades from western skies,
Dark shadows dance upon the walls,
  As from the hearth red flames arise.
This hour is full of strange surprise,
  Of mystic stories sweet and grand;
And children hear with shining eyes
  These Chronicles of Faeryland.

II.

So, children, gather round my knee,
  And list to tales of old romance;
With stories of the land and sea
  I'll make your eyes with pleasure dance.
And if the fays are kind, perchance
  You'll see in dreams the elfish band,
Whene'er you hear with wond'ring glance
  These Chronicles of Faeryland.

III.

The rugged caves where giants dwell;
  The dragons guarding gems and gold;
Fair ladies who by magic spell
  Are held enchained in castles old;
The handsome princes, brave and bold,
  Who cross the moat by drawbridge spanned:
Such tales and more will now unfold
  These Chronicles of Faeryland.

Envoi.

Then, children, leave your books and toys,
  And come to this enchanted strand;
I tell for happy girls and boys
  These Chronicles of Faeryland.

KING OBERON'S LIBRARY.

IT was after dinner, I think, as I was seated in my arm-chair before the fire, tired out with hard work, and therefore half asleep. All day long it had been snowing hard, and even now, at seven o'clock in the evening, it was still coming down in great white flakes, making the earth look like a beautiful birthday cake. There was no light in the room, except the red glimmer of the fire that flickered and flared on the wide hearth, roaring up the great chimney, as if it was grumbling to itself at having to go out into the cold, cold night.

Now, I am very fond of the firelight in a dark room at such an hour, for it casts strange shadows, which put strange fancies into my head, and I tell these strange fancies to good children, which pleases them very much. For the children I tell them to are very wise, and believe in these strange fancies, calling them faery tales, as indeed they are. Grown-up people do not believe in faery tales, which is a great pity, because there are many good and beautiful stories told of the faeries, which make people who really understand them better and wiser. But all children understand them because all children know

that Faeryland exists, and, therefore, the strange fancies called faery tales must necessarily be true.

Well, as I said before, I was seated half-asleep in my arm-chair in the dark, watching the fire burning merrily on the hearth, and sending out great shafts of red light to explore dark corners, where goblins are fond of lurking. On the roof and on the wall danced the firelight shadows in the most amusing manner; but they are foolish folk these same shadows, belonging to the strange Kingdom of Shadowland, which lies near the realm of Faery; yet not mingling with it in any way, for in Faeryland, as wise children know, there are no shadows at all.

I grew tired watching the shadow-dance, so, letting my chin sink on my breast, I stared into the red hollows and burning caverns made by the flames among the logs of wood. There I saw all kinds of curious things,—turreted castles, which held enchanted princesses, broad red plains, across which journeyed brave knights in armour, to deliver those same princesses, and huge rocky caverns wherein dwelt cruel magicians, who try to stop the brave knights from reaching the enchanted castles. I saw all these things in the fire, and you can see them also, if you look steadily into the flames at night-time, because then everything is under the spell of faery power. But you must believe very hard indeed, as you look, for the faeries will not let their country be seen by children who doubt that the beautiful land exists.

There were some twigs on the logs still bearing a few withered leaves, but, being out of reach of the fire, they were not burnt up; nevertheless the flames made them quiver with

their hot breath, just as if they were still being shaken by the cool breeze of the forest.

Now, while I was looking at the shaking of the withered leaves, a cricket began to chirp, and, whether it was the magic of the darkness, or the influence of the faeries, I do not know, but I understood every word of the song the cricket sang. Oh, it was really a famous singer, that merry cricket, and the song it sang went something after this fashion.

THE CRICKET'S SONG.

You can only hear my voice;
  But you cannot see me.
Oh, would not your heart rejoice,
  If you could but be me!

Thro' the sultry summer hours
  My shrill voice was ringing;
Now, when cold has killed the flowers,
  By the fire I'm singing.

You don't understand my song,
  Tho' so bright and airy;
For to mortals you belong,
  You are not a faery.

Living now the earth upon,
  Oft my life's imperilled;
But at court of Oberon,
  I'm the faeries' herald.

If you caught me you would say,
  "In the fire stick it;
In the house it shall not stay,
  Noisy, noisy cricket."

Therefore by the Faery King,
  I to hide am bidden,
And you only hear me sing
  When I'm closely hidden

First of all, it sounded as if only one cricket was singing, then a second seemed to join in, afterwards a third and fourth, until the whole forest appeared to be full of crickets.

Forest?—yes!—I was now in an old, old forest, for, as I listened to the cricket's song, the twigs on the logs became fresh and green, then seemed to grow larger and larger, until they hid the red light of the fire, and branched out with great leafy boughs into the room. I looked up in surprise, and saw the green branches, high above my head, waving in the soft wind, and I could hear the singing of unseen birds sound through the chirping of the crickets. Under my feet, instead of a carpet, there was now fresh green turf covered with daisies, and my arm-chair was a chair no longer, but the mossy trunk of a fallen tree. The red light glimmered behind the leaves, as though the fire was still there, but I knew in some strange way that it was not the fire, but the crimson glare of the sunset. A great wave of phantasy seemed to roll through the forest, and I started to my feet, as the crickets finished singing, with a curious sense of wonderful knowledge and vague longings.

"Dear me!" I said to myself; "this must be Faeryland."

"Yes, it is Faeryland," piped a shrill voice, which seemed to come from the ground. "This is the Forest of Enchantment."

I looked down without astonishment, for in Faeryland no one is astonished at the strange things which take place, and saw an old, old little man, with a long white beard, sitting astride the stem of a flower, which kept swaying up and down like a rocking-horse. He was dressed in bright green, with the inverted purple cup of a Canterbury bell on his head, and if he had not spoken I would not have known he was there, so much

"YES, IT IS FAERYLAND," PIPED A SHRILL VOICE

did his clothes and cap resemble the surrounding green grass and coloured flowers.

"Goblin?" I asked quickly; for, you see, he looked so old and ugly that I thought he must be one of the underground faeries.

"I'm not a goblin," he replied in an angry, shrill voice, like the wind whistling through a keyhole. "It is very rude of you to call me a goblin—a nasty thing who lives under the earth, and only cares for gold and silver. I'm a faery—a very celebrated faery indeed."

"But you wear a beard," I said doubtfully; "faeries don't wear beards."

"Not all faeries," he answered, with dignity, jumping down from his swaying flower stem; "but I do, because I am the librarian of King Oberon."

"Dear me! I did not know he had a library. Do let me see it!"

"You see it now," said the librarian, waving his hand; "look at all the books."

I looked round, but saw nothing except a circle of trees, whose great boughs, meeting overhead, made a kind of leafy roof, through which could be seen the faint, rosy flush of the sunset sky. The ground, as I said before, was covered with daisy-sprinkled turf, and there was a still pool of shining water in the centre, upon the bosom of which floated large white lilies.

"I must say I don't see anything except leaves," I said, after a pause.

"Well—those are the books."

"Oh, are they! Well, I know books have leaves, but I didn't know leaves were books."

The faery looked puzzled.

"You must have some faery blood in you," he said at length, "or you would never have found your way into this forest; but you don't seem to have enough of the elfin nature to see all the wonders of Faeryland."

"Oh, do let me see the wonders of Faeryland!" I asked eagerly; "now that I am here, I want to see everything."

"No doubt you do," retorted the faery, with a provoking smile; "but I don't know if the King will let you—however, I'll ask him when he wakes."

"Is he asleep?" I said in astonishment; "why, it's day-time."

"It's day-time with you, not with us," answered the librarian; "the night is the day of the faeries—and see, there's the sun rising."

Looking up through the fretwork of boughs and leaves, I saw the great silver shield of the moon trembling in the dark blue sky, from whence all the sunset colours had died away.

"But that's the moon," I cried, laughing.

"The moon is our sun, stupid," he said tartly. "I think the King will be awake now, so I'll ask him if you can see the books."

He vanished,—I don't know how; for, though I did not take my eyes off him, he seemed to fade away, and in his place I saw the green leaves and slender stem of a flower, with the Canterbury bell nodding on the top.

The only thing I could do was to wait, so I sat down again on the fallen tree, and amused myself with looking round to see what kind of creatures lived in Faeryland.

The night was very still,—no sound of cricket or bird, not even the whisper of the wind, or the splash of water,—all was silent, and the moon, looking down through the leaves, flooded the glade with a cold, pale light, turning the still waters of the pool to a silver mirror, upon which slept the great white lilies.

Suddenly, a bat, whirring through the glade, disappeared in the soft dusk of the trees, then I heard the distant "Tu whit, tu whoo" of an owl, which seemed to break the spell of the night, and awaken the sleeping faeries; for all at once, on every side, I heard a confused murmur, the glow-worms lighted their glimmering lamps on the soft mossy banks, and brilliant fire-flies flashed like sparkling stars through the perfumed air.

Then a nightingale began to sing; I could not see the bird, but only heard the lovely music gushing from amid the dim gloom of the leaves, filling the whole forest with exquisite strains. I understood the nightingale's song just as well as I did that of the cricket, but what it sang was much more beautiful.

THE NIGHTINGALE'S SONG.

The Day has furled
Her banners red,
And all the world
Lies cold and dead;
All light and gladness fled.

Asleep!—asleep,
In slumber deep,
Are maid and boy;
And grief and joy,
And pleasures—pains
Are bound—fast bound in slumber's chains.

Ah, slumbers keep
The maid who sighs,
The boy who cries,
The bee that flies,
In charmèd sleep.

See how the moon shines in the sky
Her light so pale,
O'er hill and dale;
O'er dale and hill,
So calm and still,
In splendour flinging;
And Mother Earth,
At her bright birth,
Hears me the night-bird singing.

'Tis I!
Who in the darkness cry;
The nightingale who sings, who sings on high.
I call the elves
To show themselves;
They creep from tree, from grass, from flower;
In forest-bower
At midnight hour,
They dance—they dance,
All night so bright—so light;
While I the woods with song entrance.

Singing—Singing,
My voice is ringing
Thro' the still leaves,
Till all the dark night heaves
With pain—with pain
Again—oh, sing again;
Bring joy—bring tears,
Till o'er the lawn
The red, red dawn
Appears—appears—appears.

While the nightingale was thus singing in such a capricious manner, paying no attention to metre or rhyme, the whole glade changed, but I was so entranced with the bird music, that I did not notice the transformation until I found myself in a splendid hall with a lofty ceiling, seated on a couch of green velvet. The trees around were now tall slender pillars of white marble, and between them hung long curtains of emerald velvet. The pool was still in the centre, with its broad white water-lilies asleep on its breast, but it was now encircled by a rim of white marble, and reflected, not the blue sky, but an azure ceiling, upon which fantastic patterns in gold reminded me somewhat of the intricate traceries of the trees. High up in the oval ceiling, in place of the moon, there hung a large opaque globe, from whence a soft, cool light radiated through the apartment.

As I was looking at all these beautiful things, I heard a soft laugh, and, on turning round, saw a man of my own height, dressed in robes of pale green, with a sweeping white beard, a purple cap on his head, and a long slender staff in his hands.

"You don't know me?" he said in a musical voice. "My name is Phancie, and I am the librarian of the King."

"Were you the faery?" I asked, looking at him.

"I am always a faery," he replied, smiling. "You saw me as I generally appear to mortals; but, as the King has given you permission to learn some of the secrets of Faeryland, I now appear to you in my real form."

"So this is the King's library?" I said, looking round; "but how did I come here?—or rather, how did the glade change to the library?"

"The glade has not changed at all," said Phancie quietly; "it is still around you, but your eyes have been unsealed, and you now see beneath the surface."

"But I don't understand," I observed, feeling perplexed.

"It is difficult," assented Phancie gravely, "but I can show you what I mean by an illustration. When you see a grub, it only looks to your eyes an ugly brown thing; but my eyes can see below the outside skin, to where a beautiful butterfly is lying with folded wings of red and gold. The glade you saw was, so to speak, the skin of the library. Now, your sight has been made keen by the command of the King. You see this splendid room—it is still the glade, and still the room; only it depends upon your sight being lightened or darkened."

"It doesn't look a bit like the glade."

"You don't think so, of course," said Phancie kindly; "but I will explain. The white pillars are the trunks of the trees; the green curtains between are the green leaves; the ceiling is the blue sky; the white globe that gives light is the moon; and the golden fretwork on the ceiling is the leaves and boughs of the trees shining against the clear sky."

"And the books?" I asked quickly.

"Here are the books," he replied, drawing one of the green curtains a little on one side, and there I saw rows of volumes in brown covers, which reminded me somewhat of the tint of the withered leaves.

"You can stay here as long as you like," said Phancie, dropping the curtain, "and read all the books."

"Oh, I can't stay long enough for that," I said regretfully. "I would be missed from my house."

"No, you would not," he replied. "Time in Faeryland is different from time on earth—five minutes with you means five years with us—so if you stay here thirty years, you will only have been away from earth half an hour."

"But I'm afraid"—

"Still unconvinced!" interrupted Phancie, a little sadly, leading me forward to the pool of water. "You mortals never believe anything but what you see with your own eyes—look!"

He waved his white wand, and the still surface of the water quivered as if a breeze had rippled across it; then it became still again, and I saw my own room, and myself seated asleep in the arm-chair in front of a dull red fire. I closed my eyes for a moment, and when I looked again the vision had vanished.

"How is it my body is there and I am here?" I asked, turning to Phancie.

"What you saw is your earthly body," he said quietly, "but the form you now wear is your real body—like the butterfly and the grub of which I told you. Now, you can look at the books. You will not remember all you read, because there are some thoughts you may not carry back to earth; but the King will let you remember seven stories which you can tell to the children of your world. They will believe them, but you—ah! you will say they are dreams."

"Oh no, I won't," I said eagerly, "because it would not be true. This is not a dream."

"No, it is not a dream," he said sadly; "but you will think it to be so."

"Never!"

"Oh yes, you will. Mortals never believe."

I turned angrily away at this remark, but when I looked again to reply, Phancie had vanished—faded away like a wreath of snow in the sunshine, and I was alone in the beautiful room.

Oh, it was truly a famous library, containing the most wonderful books in the world, but none of which I had seen before, except the faery tales. In one recess I found the lost six books of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the last tales told by Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims, the end of Coleridge's *Christabel*, some forgotten plays of Shakespeare, and many other books which had been lost on earth, or which the authors had failed to complete. I learned afterwards that they finished their earthly works in Faeryland, and that none of the books they had written during their lives were in the library, but only those they had not written.

You will not know the names of the books I have mentioned, because you are not old enough to understand them but when you grow up, you will, no doubt, read them all—not the faery books, of course, but all the others which the men I mention have written.

In another recess I found nothing but faery tales—*Jack and the Beanstalk*, *The White Cat*, *The Yellow Dwarf*, and many others, which were all marked *The Chronicles of Faeryland.*

I do not know how long I was in the library, because there was no day or night, but only the soft glow of the moon-lamp shining through the room. I read many, many of the books, and they were full of the most beautiful stories, which all children would love to hear; but, as Phancie said, I only remember seven, and these seven I will now relate.

I hope you will like them very much, for they are all true stories in which the faeries took part, and there is more wisdom in them than you would think.

The faeries understand them, and so do I, because I have faery blood in my veins; but many grown-up people who read them will laugh, and say they are only amusing fables. The wise children, however, who read carefully and slowly will find out the secrets they contain, and these secrets are the most beautiful things in the world.

So now I have told you how I was permitted to enter Faeryland, I will relate the stories I remember which I read in the faery palace, and the clever child who finds out the real meanings of these stories will perhaps some day receive an invitation from King Oberon to go to Faeryland and see all the wonders of his beautiful library.

THE RED ELF

I.

HOW THE RED ELF RAN AWAY FROM FAERYLAND.

FAERYLAND lies between the Kingdom of the Shadows and the Country of the Giants. If you want to reach it you must sail across the Sea of Darkness, which rolls everlastingly round these three strange places, and separates them from our world. Then you journey first through the Giants' Country, the inhabitants of which are very like ourselves, only larger and fiercer, with very little spiritual nature in their enormous bodies; afterwards you pass into Faeryland, where the elves are bright, graceful creatures, who possess forms like ours, and not a little of our nature. Beyond lies the strange Kingdom of Shadows, where dwell things which have very little in common with our earth; they are the shadows of the past and the future, of what has been, and what yet shall be. Mortals have strayed by chance into the Giants' Country, and in old stories we are told they have

lived in Faeryland, but no living man or woman has ever seen the Kingdom of Shadows, nor will they ever see it during life.

Now, the Faeries, being afraid of the Shadows, never enter their kingdom, but they also never enter the Country of the Giants, because they despise them very much as being lower than themselves, much the same as we look down upon the uncivilised savages of Africa. Oberon, who, as you know, is the King of Faery, made a law that no elf should ever go into the Giants' Country, being afraid lest the faeries should learn things there which would bring evil on his own land. So when the faeries want to visit our earth, they do not cross the Giants' Country, but come in another way which is known only to themselves. Having thus explained how these three countries lie, I will now tell you of a naughty elf who, disobeying the King's command, lost himself in the Giants' Country, and of the difficulty he had in getting back to Faeryland.

The elf's name was Gillydrop, a beautiful little creature all dressed in clothes of a pale green tint, which is the favourite colour of the faeries, as every one knows who has seen them dance in the moonlight. Now Gillydrop was full of curiosity, which is a very bad thing, as it leads people into a great deal of trouble, and although he had never bothered his head about the Giants' Country before, as soon as he heard the proclamation of Oberon he immediately determined to see for himself what the giants were like. Do you not think this was a very naughty thing for him to do? it certainly was, but he was punished for his disobedience, as all naughty people are sooner or later.

He spoke to two or three faeries in order to get them to

join him, but they would not disobey the King's command, and advised him to give up his foolish idea.

"The King is very wise," they said, "and no doubt he has a good reason for not letting us visit the Giants' Country, so you ought to do as he tells you."

"I don't care," replied naughty Gillydrop; "I'm sure there is something in the Giants' Country the King does not want us to know, and I am determined to find out what it is."

So, in spite of all warnings, he spread his beautiful wings, which were spotted silver and blue, like a white-clouded sky, and flew away through the woods. It was night-time, for, of course, that is the faeries' day, but the way to Giants' Country was so long that by the time he reached the end of the forest, and came to the boundary of Faeryland, the red dawn was breaking, so he crept into the bosom of a rose, and, after getting a honey supper from a friendly bumble-bee, curled himself up to sleep.

All through the long day, while the sun was high in the blue sky, he slept, lulled by the swaying of the flower, which rocked like a cradle, and soothed by the whisper of the wind and the buzzing of the bees as they hummed round his rose-house.

At last the weary, hot day came to an end, the silver moon arose in the dark blue sky, the wind sighing through the forest made the delicate leaves tremble with its cool breath, and the elf awoke. He left the kind rose, which had sheltered him in her golden heart from the heat of the day, and flew towards the rippling stream which lies on the confines of Faeryland. Away

in the distance, he could hear the murmuring laughter of the faeries, as they danced to the sound of elfin music, but he was too anxious to get into the Giants' Country to trouble himself about his old friends.

Just as he was about to cross the boundary, the leaves of the Faery forest sighed out the word "Beware!" but, not heeding the warning, he flew across the stream, and found himself at last in the terrible country where dwelt the foolish giants and the evil ogres. As he alighted upon an enormous daisy, which was as large as a mushroom, a voice rang out from Faeryland, full and clear, like the sound of a beautiful bell:

"Never more come back you need,
Till you've done some kindly deed."

And so when Gillydrop looked back, he saw no green banks, no tall trees, no beautiful flowers, but only a wide grey ocean sleeping in sullen stillness under the cold light of the moon.

He was now flying over a dreary waste plain, with great circles of upright stones standing here and there, and a bitter cold wind blowing shrilly across the flat country towards the sullen grey sea. Had he not been able to fly, he would never have crossed the plain, because the grass stood up like mighty spears, and the furze bushes were like great trees. On every side he saw immense mountains, blue in the distance, lifting their snowy summits to the clouds, with great trees at their foot looking like enormous hills of leaves. There were no birds flying in the cold air, and no animals crawling on the bleak earth; everything seemed dead and silent, except the wind,

which moaned through the mighty trees like the roaring of oceans.

There are no towns in Giantland, because the giants are not very fond of one another, and prefer to live by themselves in lonely castles among the mountains. Gillydrop knew this, but, although he looked on every side, he could see no sign of any castle, until at last he suddenly came on one which was quite in ruins, and so tumbled down that no one could possibly dwell in it. He flew on, feeling rather afraid, and came to another castle, also in ruins, with a huge white skeleton lying at the foot of a high tower, which was no doubt the skeleton of the giant who had lived there.

Then he found a third, a fourth, a fifth castle, all deserted and in ruins. It seemed as though all the giants were dead, and Gillydrop, in despair at the sight of such desolation, was about to fly back to Faeryland, when he suddenly thought of the voice which had said :

"Never more come back you need,
Till you've done some kindly deed."

Poor Gillydrop was now in a dreadful plight, and, folding his weary wings, he dropped to the ground, where he sat in the hollow of a buttercup, which was like a large golden basin, and wept bitterly. He could never return to Faeryland until he had done some kindly deed, but, as there was no one to whom he could do a good deed, he did not see how he could perform any, so cried dreadfully at the thought of living for evermore in the desolate Giants' Country. So you see what his disobedience had brought him to, for, instead of dancing

merrily with his friends in the Forest of Faeryland, he was seated, a poor, lonely little elf, in a dreary, dreary land, with no one to comfort him.

While he was thus weeping, he heard a sound like distant thunder; but, as there were no clouds in the sky, he knew it could not be thunder.

"It must be a giant roaring,' said Gillydrop, drying his eyes with a cobweb. "I'll go and ask him where all his friends have gone."

So he flew away in the direction from whence came the sound, and speedily arrived at a great grey castle, with many towers and battlements, perched on the top of a very high hill. At its foot rolled the Sea of Darkness, and round the tall towers the white mists were wreathed like floating clouds. There was a wide road winding up the steep sides of the rock to the castle door, which was as high as a church; but Gillydrop, having wings, did not use the road, so flew right into the castle through an open window.

The giant, whose name was Dunderhead, sat at one end of a large hall, cutting slices of bread from an enormous loaf which lay on the table in front of him. He looked thin,—very, very thin,—as though he had not had a good dinner for a long time; and he thumped the table with the handle of his knife as he sang this song, taking a large bit of bread between every verse·

THE GIANT'S SONG.

Oh, if my life grows harder,
I'll wish that I were dead!
There's nothing in the larder
Except this crust of bread.

With hunger I am starving,
  And it would give me joy
If just now I was carving
  A little girl or boy.

I've drunk up all the coffee,
  I've eaten all the lamb,
I've swallowed all the toffee
  And finished all the jam.

I want to get some plum-cake—
  I only wish I could;
For if I can't get some cake
  I'll die for want of food.

Here Dunderhead stopped singing with a roar of pain, for while cutting himself some more bread, the knife slipped and gashed his hand in a most terrible manner. A great spout of blood gushed out like a torrent and settled into a dark red pool on the table, while the giant, roaring with anger, wrapped up his wounded hand in his handkerchief, which was as large as a tablecloth.

"What are you crying about, giant?" asked Gillydrop, who had perched himself on the table, where he sat, looking like a green beetle.

"I've cut my finger," said the giant in a sulky tone; "you'd cry, too, if you cut your finger. Don't call me a giant —my name is Mr. Dunderhead. What is your name?"

"Gillydrop. I'm a faery."

"I thought you were a beetle," said Dunderhead crossly. "What do you want here?"

"I've come to see the giants, Mr. Dunderhead," replied Gillydrop.

"You won't see any, then," said Dunderhead, making a face. "They're all dead except me. I'm the last of the giants. You see, we ate up every boy and girl that lived near us, and all the sheep, and all the cattle, until there was nothing left to eat; and as none of us could cross the Sea of Darkness, every one died except me, and I won't live long—this loaf is all I've got to eat."

"Perhaps if I do a kindly deed to Dunderhead by getting him a meal, I'll be able to go back to Faeryland," thought Gillydrop, as he listened to the giant's story.

"Well, what are you thinking about?" growled Dunderhead, cutting himself another slice of bread.

"I was thinking how I could get you some food," replied Gillydrop.

"What! you?" roared the giant; "a little thing like you get me food! Ha, ha, ha!" and he thumped the table with his great fist.

Now, as he did this, everything on the table jumped up with the shock, and so did Gillydrop, who had no time to spread his wings and prevent himself falling; so when he fell he came down splash into the pool of blood. He gave a cry of terror when he fell in, and after crawling out with some difficulty, he found his beautiful green clothes were all red, just as if he had been dipped in red ink.

The rude giant laughed heartily at the poor elf's plight, but to Gillydrop it was no laughing matter, for there is nothing the faeries dislike so much as the colour red.

"Oh dear, dear, dear!" sighed Gillydrop, while the tears ran down his face; "now I'll never go back to Faeryland."

THE RUDE GIANT LAUGHED HEARTILY AT THE POOR ELF'S PLIGHT

"Why not?" asked Dunderhead, who was still eating.

"Because my clothes are red," replied the elf ruefully; "no one who wears red clothes is allowed to live in Faeryland. Cannot I clean my clothes?"

"No," answered the giant, taking a bit out of the loaf. "You are dyed red with my blood, and the only way to get your clothes green again is to wash them in my tears."

"Oh, let me do it at once!" cried Gillydrop, jumping up and down with delight. "Do cry, Mr. Giant, please do."

"I can't cry when I'm told to," growled Dunderhead; "but if you go to earth and bring me two nice fat children for supper, I'll weep tears of joy, and then you can wash in my tears and become a green beetle again."

"But how am I to bring the children here?" asked Gillydrop, who never thought of the poor children being eaten, but only how he could get his emerald suit once more.

"That's your business," growled Dunderhead crossly, for you see he had eaten all the loaf, and was still hungry. "I'm going to sleep, so if you want to clean your clothes, bring me the children, and you can wash in the tears of joy I shed."

So saying, the giant leaned back in his chair and fell fast asleep, snoring so loudly that the whole room shook.

Poor Gillydrop, in his red clothes, spread his red wings, and, alighting on the beach of the Sea of Darkness, he wondered how he was to cross it, for he knew he was too feeble to fly all the way.

"Oh, I wish I hadn't been naughty!" he said to himself. "I'll never see my dear Faeryland again."

And he cried red tears, which is a most wonderful thing,

even for a faery to do. It was no use crying, however, for crying helps no one; so he looked about for a boat to carry him across the Sea of Darkness, but no boat could he see.

Gillydrop was almost in despair, when suddenly the sun arose in the east, and a broad shaft of yellow light shot across the Sea of Darkness like a golden bridge.

On seeing this, the Red Elf clapped his hands with glee, for, being a faery, he could easily run along a sunbeam; so, without waiting a moment, he jumped on to the broad golden path, and ran rapidly across the Sea of Darkness, which heaved in black billows below.

II.

HOW THE ELF BROUGHT THE GIANT'S SUPPER.

As the sun grew stronger, the beam shot farther and farther across the Sea of Darkness, until it quite bridged it over, and you may be sure Gillydrop ran as hard as ever he could, so as to reach earth quickly. It was lucky he did make haste, for, just as he alighted on a green lawn near a village, the sun hid himself behind a cloud, and of course the beam vanished.

Having thus arrived, Gillydrop began to look about for two naughty children to take to the Giants' Country for Dunderhead's supper. He was very tired, both with his journey across the Sea of Darkness, and with being up all day, which was just the same to him as staying up all night would be to us. As he was anxious to get back to Faeryland, there was no time to be lost, so, instead of going to sleep, he searched all through the village for two naughty children.

Now, in one of the pretty cottages there lived a poor widow, who had two children called Teddy and Tilly, of whom she was very fond, as they were all she had in the world to love. I am sorry to say, however, that Teddy and Tilly were not worthy of their mother's love, for they were very naughty indeed, and never so happy as when engaged in some mischief. Dame Alice, for that was the name of the poor widow, tried very hard to improve them, but it was really a waste of time, for the harder she tried the worse they became. They tore their nice clean clothes, worried the cat, destroyed the flowers, ate up everything they could lay their hands on, and altogether were a great trouble to their poor mother, who often wondered why her children were so much worse than any one else's. Dame Alice, however, had still some hope that they would improve, for, having a few friends among the faeries, she had learned that some day both Teddy and Tilly would receive a severe lesson, which would make them the best and most obedient children in the world.

There was a wood, not far from the village, which was said to be enchanted, and Teddy and Tilly were told never to enter it, but this command only made them the more anxious to disobey, and they constantly wandered about the wood, never thinking of the faeries, nor of anything else, except their own pleasure. On the day Gillydrop arrived, they had been in the wood all day, gathering nuts and chasing the squirrels. Now, as it was sundown, they were coming home to their supper, quarrelling dreadfully all the way, which was very naughty of them after spending a pleasant day.

Gillydrop heard them calling each other names, so he

peeped out from behind the leaf of a tree, where he was hidden, and, seeing their cross faces, he immediately guessed that they were two children who would do capitally for Dunderhead's supper, so at once made up his mind how to act.

It was now night, and, as the faeries say, night is caused by the overflowing of the Sea of Darkness, which rises and rises when the sun goes down, until it rolls all over the earth, and any one abroad during the night is in danger of being lost in its black waves. At dawn, however, the sea subsides, and vanishes altogether when the sun appears; but when he sets in the west, it rises once more and spreads over the earth.

Gillydrop had brought with him a withered leaf from the Giants' Country, which, being enchanted, would expand into a boat, and sail across the Sea of Darkness to the Giants' Country, for, having come from there, it was bound to return to the tree upon which it had grown.

The Red Elf took this leaf out of his pocket, and immediately it spread out into a great brown carpet, which he placed under a tree in the darkest part, and then went away to entice the children on to it.

Teddy and Tilly came through the wood, quarrelling in a noisy manner, and calling each other ugly names; not a bit afraid of the dark, although they certainly ought to have been.

"You're eating all the nuts," bellowed Teddy.

"Well, I gathered them," shrieked Tilly.

"No, you didn't; I got most," whimpered her brother crossly.

"Oh, you story! You didn't," retorted Tilly.

And then they called each other more ugly names, and fought and scratched until the whole wood resounded with their noise, and the birds trembled in their nests with fear.

Suddenly, in front of them, they saw a small red ball, glowing like a scarlet coal, and it kept dancing up and down like a restless will-o'-the-wisp.

"Oh, Teddy," cried Tilly, "look at that pretty ball!"

"It's mine!" roared greedy Teddy, rushing forward. "I'll have it."

"You shan't!" cried Tilly, running after him. "I'll get it."

But the red ball—which was none other than Gillydrop—rolled and rolled in front of the children through the dark wood, and led them deeper and deeper into the forest, until it bounded right on to a brown carpet lying under a great tree, where it lay glowing like a red-hot coal. Teddy and Tilly jumped on to the brown carpet with a scream of delight, thinking they would now seize the ball, when suddenly the sides of the brown leaf curled up, and it lengthened out into a long boat. The darkness under it grew thicker and thicker, the foliage of the tree above vanished, and the two naughty children found themselves in a boat, rolling and tossing on the black waves, with a gloomy, starless sky above them. Away at the end of the boat sat Gillydrop, who had now unrolled himself, and was guiding the magic skiff across the Sea of Darkness towards the Country of the Giants.

"Oh, I want to go home!" cried Tilly, now very frightened.

"And so do I!" roared Teddy, sitting close to her.

As they said this, they both heard a mocking ripple of

laughter, and saw the Red Elf dancing with glee at the end of the boat.

"You'll never go home again," he cried mockingly, "because you have been naughty, and must be punished."

"I'll never be naughty again," sobbed Tilly.

"No more will I," echoed Teddy; and they both wept bitterly.

"It's too late now," said Gillydrop, shaking his head. "Naughty children always get punished."

He might have said the same thing about himself; but then he was a faery, and felt ashamed to tell two human beings that he had been as naughty as themselves.

Teddy and Tilly cried dreadfully as they thought of their poor mother waiting for them at home, and of the nice supper of bread and milk which she had prepared for them; but their tears were all of no avail, for the magic boat sailed on and on, though how it moved without sails or oars they could not tell.

At last they saw a faint silver light away in the distance, and a cool breeze blew steadily against them. The light grew larger and larger until it spread everywhere, and they saw the shores of the Giants' Country, with Dunderhead's great castle hovering above them. The boat ran right up on to the beach, and then, suddenly turning into a leaf, contracted to a small size and flew away to another beech, but this time the beech was a tree.

The Red Elf vanished as soon as the leaf, and Teddy and Tilly, finding themselves alone in this dreary land, began to cry loudly. It would have been better for them if they had

held their tongues, for Dunderhead, hearing two children crying, knew at once that the elf had brought them for his supper, and came down to seize them before they could get away.

"Ah! this is the supper my friend the elf has brought me," he roared, picking up the children. "I'm so pleased! Now I'll boil them."

You may be sure that Teddy and Tilly were in a dreadful fright on hearing this, as they did not want to be boiled; but, in spite of all their cries, Dunderhead took them up to the great hall of his castle, and set them down on the table.

They were so fat and juicy that the Giant cried tears of joy at the prospect of having a good supper, and as his tears gushed out in a great torrent, Gillydrop, who had been waiting for this, plunged into the torrent to get his clothes cleaned again. Much to his dismay, however, the more he washed in the hot tears, the redder grew his clothes, until he was just the colour of the scarlet bean blossom.

"You told me a story," said Gillydrop to the giant when he saw how red he was getting.

"I know I did," said Dunderhead, drying his eyes, for he had now wept enough, and was growing hungry; "but if I hadn't told you a story, I wouldn't have got any supper. You'll never be green again, so don't trouble your head. I'm going to get some wood to cook these nice fat children."

On hearing this, Teddy and Tilly roared like bulls, and Gillydrop roared too, for he was afraid he would never be able to go back to Faeryland in his red clothes; but the giant only laughed at them, and went out to light a fire under his big kettle.

Gillydrop was naturally very cross with the giant for having deceived him, and determined to punish him for having done so. Bringing the two children to Dunderhead for his supper could not be the kindly deed he had to do, or else he would have turned green again; so Gillydrop made up his mind to take Teddy and Tilly back to earth, and thus leave Dunderhead without his supper. While he was thus making up his mind, seated at one end of the table, the two children, seated at the other end, were crying bitterly at the plight in which they now found themselves, for it certainly is not a nice thing to be boiled for an ogre's supper.

"Poor mother!" wailed Tilly, weeping; "she'll miss us so much."

"I don't know if she will," replied Teddy dolefully; "we've always been so naughty, I daresay she'll be glad we've gone."

"Oh no, she won't," said Tilly, nodding her head; "she loves us too much for that; but if we could get back I'd be so good."

"And so would I," cried Teddy; and then they both wept again, while Gillydrop, seeing their tears, wept also out of sheer sympathy.

"Perhaps the giant will only eat one of us," said Tilly after a pause; "so while one of us is boiling, the other must run away and go back to comfort mother."

"Who will be boiled?" asked Teddy sadly. "Will you, Tilly?"

"I don't like being boiled," answered Tilly, with a shudder. "I'm sure it isn't nice."

"Well, I don't like being boiled either," observed Teddy. "Suppose we draw lots who is to run away."

"Yes, that would be fair," said Tilly, drying her eyes; "and the one who wins must go back to cheer mother."

Gillydrop was quite sorry now that he had brought them for Dunderhead's supper, when he heard how they regretted their mother; so he made up his mind to save them.

"You shall neither of you be boiled," he said, walking up to them across the table, which was like a large plain. "I will take you back to your mother."

"But how?" asked Teddy and Tilly, both together. "We cannot go back across the sea alone."

"Oh yes, you can," replied the Red Elf. "I brought you here, and can send you back; that is, if I only had a leaf."

"Here is one," cried Tilly eagerly, pulling a faded leaf out of her pocket. "I picked it up in the wood to-day, it had such pretty red and yellow colours."

"Oh, that will do for a boat," said Gillydrop joyfully.

"But it's so small," objected Teddy.

"I'll make it large enough," said the elf. "You'll see."

"But how can we go on without sails or oars?" said Tilly timidly.

"You don't need any," rejoined Gillydrop, laughing; "you know every tree has power to draw back its own leaves. The boat we came in was a leaf, and, as soon as it was launched on the air, it went straight back to the tree in the Country of the Giants upon which it had grown; and as this leaf comes from a tree on earth, it will go straight back to its tree."

"Then we can get home," cried Tilly, clapping her hands, "for the tree isn't far from mother's cottage."

"Mind, you are never to be naughty again," said Gillydrop solemnly.

"Oh, no, no!" cried both children.

"And be very, very good to your mother."

"Yes, yes! We'll be very good."

"Then go down to the beach by the path," said Gillydrop, spreading his wings. "I'll fly down and get the boat ready; be quick, or the giant will return."

Then he flew away through the open window, and Teddy scrambled down the steep path, followed by Tilly, both of them in a great fright lest the giant should catch sight of them and pop them into his big kettle. When they reached the beach, they found Gillydrop had launched the leaf, which had now been transformed into a beautiful red and yellow coloured boat.

"Good-bye," said Gillydrop, as soon as they were comfortably seated in the boat. "I'm sorry I brought you here, but it will do you no harm, as it will teach you to be good. Mind you don't quarrel in the boat—if you do, the leaf will vanish, and you'll sink for ever in the black waves."

"Oh, we'll be very, very good," promised both the children eagerly, and then Gillydrop gave the boat a push, so that it moved rapidly away from the land, leaving him seated on the beach, a lonely little red figure.

Teddy and Tilly were rather afraid at finding themselves alone in the darkness, but they kissed one another, and fell asleep, while the leaf-boat sailed rapidly over the Sea of Dark-

ness towards its parent tree. When the children awoke, they found themselves lying on the ground under the tree, and there above them was their red and yellow boat, hanging, a red and yellow leaf, on a high bough.

"Now we'll go home," cried Tilly, jumping up; "now we'll go home to mother."

"And be very good," said Teddy, also rising.

"Yes; very, very good," replied Tilly. And then, taking one another's hands, they ran home to their cottage through the dark forest.

Dame Alice, who thought they had lost themselves in the wood, was very glad to see them, and, after she had kissed them, gave them a good supper of bread and milk, which they enjoyed very much, for you see they were very hungry with the long journey.

They told Dame Alice all their adventures, and she was very glad they had gone to the Giants' Country, for she guessed, like the wise mother she was, that this was the lesson the faeries had foretold.

Ever afterwards, Teddy and Tilly were good children; there never were two such good children, because they thought, if they were not good, they would be taken back to the Giants' Country and boiled for an ogre's supper. But after a time they liked to do good actions because they found it pleasant, and Dame Alice was so pleased with their behaviour that she made a rhyme about them, which soon passed into a proverb:

"The magic power of a faery
Cures a child when quite contrary."

III.

HOW THE RED ELF RETURNED TO FAERYLAND.

When Gillydrop saw the magic boat disappear into the darkness of the sea, he thought that, now he had done one kindly deed, his clothes would change from red to green, and he would be able to return to his dear Faeryland. But nothing of the sort occurred, and the poor elf began to cry again, thinking he was lost for ever, but this time his tears were not red, which was a good sign, although he did not know it.

Very soon he heard Dunderhead roaring for the loss of his supper, so, drying his eyes, he flew back again to the hall of the castle, to see what the giant was doing. He found a great fire was lighted, over which was suspended a great kettle filled with water, which was now boiling hot. Dunderhead was searching everywhere for the children, and when he saw Gillydrop he shook his great fist at him.

"Where's my supper, you red rag?" he roared fiercely.

"Your supper has gone back to earth," replied Gillydrop angrily, for no one likes to be called a red rag. "You told me a story, so I thought I'd punish you."

"Oh, did you?" bellowed Dunderhead, in a rage. "Then I'll punish you also for spoiling my supper." And before Gillydrop could fly away, he caught him in his great hand and popped him into the boiling water.

Oh, it was terribly hot, and Gillydrop thought it was all over with him; but, being a Faery, he could not be killed, as the foolish giant might have known. He sank down, down,

right to the bottom of the great kettle, and then arose once more to the top. As soon as he found his head above water, he sprang out of the kettle and flew away high above the head of Dunderhead, who could only shake his fist at him.

To his delight and surprise, Gillydrop found his clothes had all changed from red to green, and instead of being dressed in crimson, his suit was now of a beautiful emerald colour. He was so delighted that he flew down on to the floor of the hall, and began to dance and sing, while the giant joined in as he tried to catch him; so that they had quite a duet.

Gillydrop. Now I'm gay instead of sad,
For I'm good instead of bad:
Dreadful lessons I have had.
Giant. I will catch and beat you!

Gillydrop. Tho' a naughty elf I've been,
Now my clothes are nice and clean:
I dance once more a faery green.
Giant. I will catch and eat you!

But you see he could not do that, because Gillydrop was too quick for him, and flew round the hall, laughing at Dunderhead, who roared with anger. Then the elf flew out on to the terrace which overlooked the Sea of Darkness, followed by the giant. Gillydrop flew down on to the beach to escape the ogre, and Dunderhead tried to follow; but, as he could not fly, he fell right into the Sea of Darkness. Dear me! what a terrible splash he made! The waves arose as high as the castle walls, but then they settled down again over Dunderhead, who was suffocated in the black billows. He was the very last of the giants, and now his bones lie white and gleaming in the depths

of the Sea of Darkness, where nobody will ever find them—nor do I think any one would trouble to look for them.

As for Gillydrop, now that Dunderhead was dead, he flew away across the dreary plain towards Faeryland, and soon arrived at the borders of the sullen grey sea which still rolled under the pale light of the moon. Gillydrop was not a bit afraid now, because his clothes were green once more, and he had performed one kindly deed; so he sat down on the sea-shore and sang this song:

"When from Faeryland I fled,
All my nice clothes turned to red;
Now in emerald suit I stand—
Take me back to Faeryland."

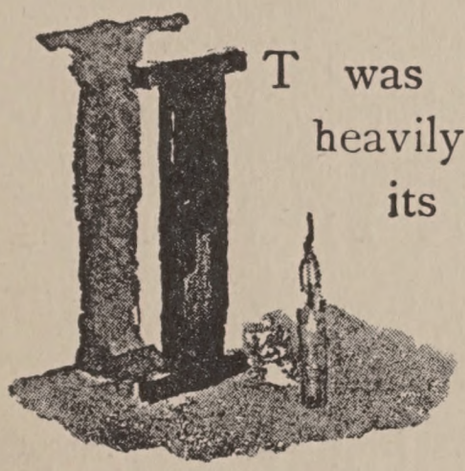
And as he sang the grey ocean faded away, and in its place he saw the green trees of the faery forest, waving their branches in the silver moonlight. Only a bright sparkling stream now flowed between Gillydrop and Faeryland; so, spreading his silver and blue wings, he flew across the water, singing gaily:

"Thanks, dear Oberon. At last
All my naughtiness is past;
Home I come without a stain,
And will never roam again."

So at last Gillydrop got back to Faeryland after all his trials, and ever afterwards was one of the most contented elves ever known. You may be sure he never wanted to see the Country of the Giants again, and whatever King Oberon said he did willingly, because he knew it must be right.

He was quite a hero among the faeries, and had the honour of telling all his adventures to King Oberon himself, which he did so nicely that the King gave him a title, and ever afterwards he was called "Sir Gillydrop the Fearless."

SHADOWLAND



IT was Christmas Eve, and the snow, falling heavily over a great city, was trying to hide with its beautiful white robe all the black, ugly houses and the narrow, muddy streets. The gas lamps stood up proudly, each on its tall post, and cast their yellow light on the crowds of people hurrying along with their arms filled with many lovely presents for good children.

"They are poor things," said the gas lamps scornfully. "If we did not shed our light upon them, they would be lost in the streets."

"Ah, but the people you despise made you," cried the church bells, which were calling the people to prayer. "They made you —they made you, and gave you your beautiful yellow crowns."

But the street lamps said nothing, because they could not deny what the church bells said, and instead of acknowledging that they owed all their beauty to the people they despised, remained obstinately silent.

Near one of these lamp-posts, at the end of a street, stood a ragged boy, who shivered dreadfully in his old clothes, and

stamped about to keep himself warm. The boy's name was Tom, and he was a crossing-sweeper, as could be seen by his well-worn broom. He was very cold and very hungry, for he had not earned a copper all day, and the gaily-dressed army of people swept selfishly past him, thinking only of their Christmas dinners and warm homes.

The snowflakes fell from the leaden-coloured sky like great white angels, to tell the earth that Christ would be born again on that night, but Tom did not have any such ideas, as he was quite ignorant of angels, and even of the birth of the child-Christ. He only looked upon the snow as a cold and cruel thing, which made him shiver with pain, and was a great trouble to brush away from his crossing.

And overhead the mellow bells clashed out their glad tidings in the bitterly chill air, while below, in the warm, well-lighted churches, the organ rolled out its hymns of praise, and the worshippers said to one another, "Christ is born again."

But poor Tom!

Ah, how cold and hungry he was, standing in the bright glare of the lamp, with his rags drawn closely round him for protection against the falling snow. The throng of people grew

AS TOM PICKED IT UP HE FELT THAT IT WAS FILLED WITH MONEY

thinner and thinner, the gaily-decorated shops put up their shutters, the lights died out in the painted windows of the churches, the bells were silent, and only poor Tom remained in the deserted, lonely streets, with the falling snowflakes changing him to a white statue.

He was thinking about going to his garret, when a gentleman, wrapped in furs, passed along quickly, and just as he came near Tom, dropped his purse, but, not perceiving his loss, walked on rapidly through the driving snow. Tom's first idea was to pick the purse up and restore it to its owner, whom Tom knew very well by sight, for he was a poet, who daily passed by Tom's crossing. Then Tom paused for a moment as he thought of all the beautiful things the money in that purse would buy; while he hesitated, the poet disappeared in the darkness of the night, so Tom was left alone with the purse at his feet.

There it lay, a black object on the pure white snow, and as Tom picked it up, he felt that it was filled with money. Oh, how many things of use to him could that money buy—bread and meat and a cup of warm coffee—which would do him good. Tom slipped it into his pocket, and thought he would buy something to eat; but just at that moment he seemed to hear a whisper in the air,—

"Thou shalt not steal."

With a start of terror Tom looked around, thinking a policeman had spoken, and would take him off to prison for stealing the purse, but no policeman was in sight. He saw nothing but the whirling flakes and his ragged shadow cast

blackly on the white snow by the light of the lamp. It could not have been the shadow speaking, as Tom thought, for he knew that shadows never speak; but, ah! he did not know the many wonderful things there are in this wonderful world of ours.

Whoever had made the remark touched Tom's heart, for he remembered how his poor mother had blessed him when she died, and told him to be an honest boy. It certainly would not be honest to steal money out of the purse, but Tom was so cold and hungry that he half thought he would do so. He took out the purse again and looked at its contents—four shining sovereigns and some silver. Then he put it back in his pocket, and trudged home with his broom under his arm.

Home!—ah, what a dreary, cheerless home it was!—nothing but a garret on the top of an old house—a bare garret, with no table or chairs, but only the sacks upon which Tom slept at night.

He closed the door, and then lighted a little bit of candle he had picked up in the streets with one of the matches from a box given him by a ragged match-seller.

Tom placed the candle on the floor, and, kneeling down, opened the purse to look at the money once more. Oh, how tempted he was to take one of those shillings and buy some food and wood—it would be a merry Christmas for him then! Other people were enjoying their Christmas, and why should he not do the same? The great poet who had dropped the purse had plenty of money, and would never miss this small sum; so Tom, desperate with hunger, took a shilling, and, hiding the purse under his bed, was about to blow out the

candle before creeping down-stairs to buy some food, when he heard a soft voice whisper,—

"Don't go, Tom."

He turned round, and there was the shadow cast by the reflection of the candle-light on the wall. It was a very black shadow, much blacker than Tom had ever seen before, and as he looked it grew blacker and blacker on the wall, then seemed to grow out of it until it left the wall altogether, and stood by itself in the centre of the floor, a waving, black shadow of a ragged boy. Curiously enough, however, Tom could not see its face, but only the outline of its whole figure, yet it stood there shaking with every flicker of the candle, and Tom could feel that its eyes were looking right into him.

"Don't go, Tom," said the shadow, in a voice so like his own that he started. "If you go, you will be lost for ever."

"Lost?" said Tom, with a laugh; "why, I couldn't lose myself. I know every street in the city."

"I don't mean really lost," replied the shadow; "but it will be your first step on the downward path."

"Who are you?" asked Tom, rather afraid of the shadow, but keeping a bold front.

"I am your shadow," it replied, sighing. "I follow you wherever you go, but only appear when there is light about you. If you had not lighted that candle I would not have appeared, nor could I have spoken."

"Was it you who spoke at the lamp-post?" said Tom doubtfully.

"Yes, it was I," answered the shadow. "I wanted to save you then, as I do now, from committing a crime. Sit down, Tom, and let us talk."

Tom sat down, and the shadow sat down also. Then for the first time he caught a passing glimpse of its face, just like his own, only the eyes were sad—oh, so sad and mournful!

"Thou shalt not steal," said the shadow solemnly.

"I don't want to steal," replied Tom sulkily; "but I'm cold and hungry. This shilling would buy me fire and food. I don't call that stealing."

"Yes, but it is stealing," answered the shadow, wringing its hands; "and you know it is. If you steal you will be put in prison, and then I shall have to go also. Think of that, Tom, think of that."

Tom did not say a word, but sat on the floor looking at the bright shilling in his hand which could procure him so many comforts. The shadow saw how eager he was to take the shilling, and, with a sigh, began to talk again.

"Think of your mother, Tom," it said softly. "She was the wife of a gentleman—your father; but he lost all his money, and when he died she could get no one to help her. Do you remember how she died herself in this very place, and how she implored you with her last breath to be an honest boy?"

"Yes, I remember," said Tom huskily; "but she did not know how cold and hungry I would be."

"Yes she did—she did," urged the shadow. "She also had felt cold and hunger, but she never complained. She never stole, and now she has her reward, because she is a bright angel."

"I don't know what an angel is," said Tom crossly; "but if she's all right, why doesn't she help me?"

"She does help you, Tom," said the shadow; "and it was because she saw you were tempted to steal to-night that she asked me to help you. She cannot speak as I do, because she is not a shadow."

"Well, help me if you're able," said Tom defiantly; "but I don't believe you can."

The candle on the floor had burnt very low, and as Tom said the last words his shadow bent nearer and nearer, until he again saw those mournful eyes, which sent a shiver through his whole body. It stretched out its arms, and Tom felt them close round him like soft, clinging mist; the candle flared up for a moment, and then went out, leaving Tom in darkness altogether. But he did not feel a bit afraid, for the soft arms of the shadow were round him, and he felt that it was carrying him through the air.

They journeyed for miles and miles, but Tom knew not which direction they were taking until a soft light seemed to spread all around, and Tom felt that he was in the midst of a large crowd, although he saw no one near him. Then he felt his bare feet touch some soft, cloudy ground, that felt like a sponge; the shadowy arms unclasped themselves, and he heard a voice, soft as the whispering of winds in summer, sigh,—

"This is the Kingdom of Shadows."

Then Tom's eyes became accustomed to the subdued twilight, and he saw on every side a number of shadows hurrying hither and thither. He seemed to be in the centre of a wide plain, over which hung a pale white mist, through which glimmered the soft light. The shadows were all gliding about this plain; some thin, some fat, some tall, others short; they all appeared to have business to do, and each appeared to be intent only on his own concerns. Tom's own shadow kept close to him, and whispered constantly in his ear of strange doings.

"These are the shadows of the past and of the future," it sighed; "all the shadows of human beings and their doings are here; see, there is a funeral."

And a funeral it was which came gliding over the smooth, white plain; the great black hearse, the dark horses with nodding plumes, and then a long train of mourners; all this came out of the mist at one end, glided slowly over the plain, and vanished in the veil of mist at the other. Then a bridal procession appeared; afterwards a great army, clashing cymbals and blowing trumpets from whence no sound of music

proceeded; then the coronation triumph of a king, and later on a confused multitude of men, women, and children, all hurrying onward with eager rapidity. But they all came out of the mist and went into the mist, only appearing on the white plain for a few minutes, like the shadows of a magic lantern.

"The stage of the world," whispered Tom's shadow. "Birth, death, and marriage, triumphs and festivities, joys and sorrows, all pass from mist to mist, and none know whence they come or whither they go."

"But what has this got to do with me?" asked Tom, who was feeling rather bewildered.

"You are a man," said his shadow reproachfully, "and must take an interest in all that men do; but come, and I will show you what will happen if you steal the purse."

They glided over the plain towards the distant curtain of mist, but how they travelled over the immense distance so rapidly Tom did not know, for in a moment it seemed to him that he had come many miles, and found himself suddenly before a grey, misty veil, with his own shadow beside him, and many other shadows around.

As he stood there, a whisper like the murmur of the sea on a pebbly beach sounded in his ears, and he seemed to guess, rather than hear, what the shadows said.

"Now he will see—now he will see—he must choose the good or the bad. Which will he choose?—which will he choose?"

Then the grey veil stirred, as if shaken by a gentle wind, and, blowing aside, disclosed what seemed to Tom to be a great sheet of ice of dazzling whiteness set up on end. As he looked,

however, shadows began to appear on the milky surface which acted a kind of play and then vanished, and in the play he was always the central figure.

First he saw himself pick up the purse in the snowy street; then hide it in his bed. He saw his ragged shadow glide down-stairs from the garret to buy food; the shopman looking at him, then at the shilling; then a policeman arresting him and finding the purse hidden in the bed. Afterwards he saw himself in prison; then released, and prowling about the streets. Years seemed to pass as he looked, and his shadow became taller and stouter, but always wearing a ragged dress. After many years he seemed to see his shadow breaking into a house —meet the owner of the house, and kill him. Afterwards the shadow of himself stood in the dock; then crouched in prison; and, last of all, he appeared standing under a black gallows with a rope round his neck. At length all the shadows vanished, and the surface of the ice mirror again became stainless, whilst a voice whispered in his ear, "All this will happen if you steal the purse."

Then the shadows again came on to the mirror and acted another play; but this time it was much more pleasant.

Tom saw his shadow representative take the purse back to the poet who had lost it. Then he saw himself in a school, learning all kinds of wonderful things; and the years rolled by, as they had done in the other play, unfolding the shadows of a beautiful life. He saw himself become a great and famous poet, who wrote beautiful books to make people wise and good. Then he saw himself in church, with a woman's shadow by his side, and he knew, in some mysterious way, that it was the

daughter of the poet who had lost the purse. And as the happy years rolled on he saw himself rich and honourable, and the end of all was a magnificent funeral, taking his body to be buried in the great church wherein many famous men were laid. Then the shadows vanished, and the mirror became pure again, while over it the grey mists fell like a soft veil, and once more the voice of his shadow said,—

"All this will happen if you remain honest."

Then the crowd of shadows around Tom looked at him with their mournful eyes, and a whispering question ran through the fantastic throng,—

"Which will he choose?—which will he choose?"

"I will choose the honest life," cried Tom loudly. "Yes, I will give back the purse to the poet."

At this the shadows around seemed to rejoice, and he could see beautiful faces smiling at him from amid the crowd. The shadow multitude broke in a wild dance of joy, keeping time to some aerial music which Tom could not hear; and his own shadow, with happiness shining out of its mournful eyes, threw its arms round him once more. A dark veil seemed to fall over him, and the great white plain, the glimmering mists, and the restless shadows, vanished together.

When Tom opened his eyes again, he found himself lying on the floor of his garret, cold and hungry still, but with his heart filled with a great joy, for the shilling was still clutched in his hand, and he knew he had not stolen the money. He took the purse from under the sacks, replaced the shilling, and then went out, in the bright sunshine of the Christmas morning, to give back the lost purse to its owner.

Overhead the bells rang out merrily, as if they were rejoicing at Tom's victory over himself, and a beautiful lady, who was on her way to church, gave Tom some money to get food. He went and bought a loaf and a cup of coffee, then, thankful for his good fortune, he trudged off to the poet's house.

The great poet received him very kindly, and, after thanking Tom for returning his purse, asked him why he had done so instead of keeping it? Whereupon Tom told the poet all about the shadow, which interested the poet very much. He also had been to Shadowland and seen strange things, which he told to the world in wonderful verse.

"This boy is a genius," he said to his wife, "and I must help him."

Then it all happened as the magic mirror had foretold, for Tom was put to school by the kind poet, and became a very clever man. He also wrote poems, which the world received with joy; and when he became a famous man, the kind poet gave him his own daughter in marriage, and the bells which had rang the birth of the child-Christ when Tom was a poor ragged boy, now rang out joyously in honour of his marriage.

"He has conquered," they clashed out in the warm, balmy air; "he is the victor, and now he will be happy."

And he was happy, very very happy, and felt deeply thankful to the shadow who had shown him the way to be happy. His own shadow never left him, but it never spoke to him again, though when Tom felt tempted to do wrong, he heard a whisper advising him to do right. Some people said

that this was the voice of conscience, but Tom knew it was the voice of his dear shadow, who still watched over him.

And one day he took his wife to the garret where he had lived when a poor boy, and told her how he had been to Shadowland, and learned that to be honest and noble was the only true way to happiness. His wife laughed, and said Tom had been dreaming; but Tom shook his head, and said that it was no dream, but a great truth.

Now, who do you think was right—Tom or his wife?

THE WATER-WITCH

I.

FIRE AND WATER.

ONCE upon a time, long long years ago, there was a shepherd called Duldy, who dwelt in the forests which clothed the base of the great mountain of Kel. This mountain was in the centre of an immense plain, watered by many rivers, and dotted over with many cities, for the kingdom of Metella was a very rich place indeed, so rich that the inhabitants looked upon gold in the same way as we look upon tin or iron, as quite a common thing. The plain was very fertile by reason of the great rivers which flowed through it like silver threads, and all these rivers took their rise in the mountain of Kel, a mighty snow-clad peak which shot up, white and shining, to the blue sky from amidst the bright green of its encircling forests.

There were old stories handed down from father to son, which said that the mountain was once a volcano, which, breathing nothing but fire, sent great streams of red-hot lava down

to the fertile plain, to wither and blight all the beautiful gardens and rich corn-fields. But the fires in the breast of the mountain had long since died out, and for many centuries the black, rugged summit had been covered with snow, while countless streams, caused by the melting of the glaciers, fell down its rocky sides, and, flowing through the cool, green pine forests, spread themselves over the thirsty plain, so that it bloomed like a beautiful garden.

Duldy lived in these scented pine forests, and was supposed to be the son of an old couple called Dull and Day, from whence by joining both names he got his own Duldy ; but he was really a lost child whom old Father Dull had found, seventeen years before, on the banks of the Foam, one of the bright sparkling streams which flowed from the snowy heights above. Dull took the child home to his wife Day, who was overcome with joy, for she ardently desired to have a little boy of her own, but never had the happiness to become a mother. This good couple took great care of Duldy, and he grew up to be a handsome youth, with golden hair, like the tint of ripe corn, and blue eyes, the colour of the sky. Any one who saw Duldy would

have said he was a prince, so noble and handsome did he look, but, alas! he was only a poor shepherd lad, for, in spite of all inquiries, Dull and Day never found out who were his parents.

Now, at eighteen years of age, Duldy was the bravest youth in the forest, for, while protecting his flock of sheep, as they browsed on the thin grass of the high lands, he had killed many wolves who would have carried off the lambs. All the forest maidens were in love with Duldy, for he looked noble and grand in his simple suit of green cloth; and, moreover, it was well known that Dull and Day would certainly leave their flock of sheep to their adopted son, so Duldy would one day be a rich man—that is, rich in the eyes of the simple country people around. But the handsome shepherd never troubled his head about the maidens who sighed so ardently at his feet, for the fact is, he had one day seen the beautiful Princess Elsa when she was hunting in the forest, and had fallen deeply in love with her.

She was really charming, the Princess Elsa, tall and stately, with dark hair and dark eyes; it was no wonder that Duldy loved her, but how hopeless was that love! She was the daughter of King Arago, who ruled over the kingdom of Metella, and he was a poor unknown shepherd lad. Still all these things happened in the days of the fairies, and when fairies take a fancy to any mortal, that mortal can gain anything, however lowly he may be, from the hand of a princess to the throne of a kingdom.

But did a fairy love Duldy? Ah, that is a difficult question to answer! He was not quite sure, and yet he was almost certain that he was loved by the Water-witch Foamina.

She was the fairy of the stream called Foam, whose sparkling

waters fell from a great height in a white veil down to a deep pool surrounded by delicate green ferns. From this pool the stream gushed out between two great stones, and babbled down the side of the mountain, glided round great moss-covered rocks rippled under the gnarled roots of ancient trees, and swirled into sombre pools beneath the cool shadow of its grass-fringed banks. After leaving the forest, it flowed broad and placid between rich fields of yellow corn, through old-fashioned villages, under the slender bridges which leaped from bank to bank, and at last mingled with the mighty river encircling the island upon which stood the city of Aurea, the capital of King Arago, wherein dwelt the beautiful Princess Elsa.

Dull and Day had both told Duldy how he had been found on the banks of the stream lying on a white bed of soft foam, and he was very fond of sitting by the brook, listening to its babbling talk, and thinking that it might tell him something about his unknown parents. One day, while he was thus sitting dreaming about the lovely princess, and wondering if he would ever see her again, he heard a light laugh, and thought he saw an arch face peering out at him from behind the falling foam of the waterfall. As he looked steadily, the face vanished, but he caught a glimpse of two white arms playing with the sparkling water, and again saw

the smiling face. Then the stream seemed to stop babbling and fretting among its stones, and form itself into words, which grew louder and clearer as he listened. It was not the murmur of the waterfall, nor the sighing of the wind, nor the babbling of the stream, but a voice, much more beautiful than all three, which sounded from behind the veil of foam, and sang this song:

"I am the daughter
Of earth and water,
Born of the sun and the snow so white.
I fall in foam
From my mountain home,
Downward flash in a torrent bright.
My streamlet rushes
And sparkling gushes, ,
Cold as ice from the virgin snow;
And see these swirls,
My foamy curls
Ringlets white in the pool below.
Now see me dancing,
Chattering, glancing;
Over and under the grey stones grim
I slide, I creep,
I bound, I leap,
On and on thro' the forest dim;
Then, broadly flowing,
Where corn is growing,
Yellow fields 'neath the azure sky,
Thro' cities old
My waters cold
By turret and tower go gliding by.
I hear the laughing
Of revellers quaffing
Wine, red wine, in the splendid night;
At morning grey
I pass away,
Golden now in the gold dawn's light.

With ceaseless motion
I flow to ocean,
Encircle first the King's chief town.
From dark to light,
From dawn till night,
Ocean calls, and I hurry down."

A burst of gay laughter ended the song, a great veil of white spray was flung over Duldy as he sat on the bank, and the stream resumed its inarticulate babbling. Duldy went home dreaming of the lovely face he had seen, but, feeling something cold clasping his wrist, he looked down and saw for a moment that it was encircled by a wreath of foam. The white bubbles vanished, but he still felt the cold clasp, and knew, though he could not see it, that the water bracelet was still on his wrist. As he stood perplexed at this wonder, the murmur of the water-fall sounding like soft thunder through the green woods shaped itself once more into words:

"'Tis I whom thou hearest.
I stole thee, my dearest.
I loved thee and kissed when thou wast a child.
I love thee for ever,
No Fate can us sever:
The foam-ring will bind thee to me undefiled."

And that is how Duldy knew he was loved by the Water-witch.

He came again to the side of the stream and heard Foamina sing the same song, and when he was going home, he once more heard her voice murmuring through the woods. This time he felt rather angry, because he did not want to be bound to the water-faery, as he was in love with the Princess Elsa. However, being a very polite youth, he said nothing, but went home laughing.

Next time he heard her singing, he could not help telling her the truth, and cried out,—

"I do not love you, but the Princess Elsa."

Instantly the still waters of the pool foamed furiously and arose up like a great fountain, in the centre of which he saw the water-faery looking angrily at him. Terrified at the sight, he hastened away, and did not go to the stream again, but on his wrist he still felt the clasp of the foam-ring, which nothing, not even hot water, could wash away.

Shortly afterwards, a rumour crept through the kingdom that the Princess Elsa had fallen into a deep sleep, out of which no one could rouse her, and the King made a proclamation that whosoever should succeed in waking her would receive her hand in marriage, and be king after him.

When Duldy heard this, he was anxious to go to the city and try to wake the beautiful Princess, but Dull and Day tried to make him give up the idea.

"You don't know how to wake her," said Dull; "it must be a magic sleep into which the Princess has fallen."

"And no one can wake a princess out of a magic sleep except a faery," observed Day sagaciously.

"At any rate I'll try," replied Duldy resolutely, "I have heard that a princess who slept for a hundred years was awakened by a kiss—perhaps if I kiss the Princess Elsa, she also will awake."

"I don't think so," said Dull, shaking his head.

"And the King would never let a poor shepherd kiss the Princess, I'm certain," said Day wisely.

"Perhaps I'm not a poor shepherd," cried Duldy cheerfully.

"I may be the son of a king for all you know; but I'll go to the city and try to waken the Princess with a kiss: the King would not mind a kiss if I wakened her."

Dull and Day shook their heads, for they were simple people, who did not know anything about courts, and were afraid Duldy, whom they loved fondly, would get into trouble.

However, Duldy was determined to try, for one does not get a chance of becoming a king every day, so, packing up a few things in a bundle, and, taking his trusty oaken staff, he set out in the cool of the evening to walk through the forest on his way to the city of Aurea.

It was a beautiful summer's night, with a gentle wind blowing, and the silver moon shining down on the snowy peak of the mountain, cast strange shadows in the old forest. Duldy did not mind the dark,—for it was rather dark,—but marched bravely on, singing aloud to keep up his spirits. Very soon he found himself walking beside a brawling stream that sometimes ran directly across his path, and as it was deep and turbulent, he was unable to cross it, but had to walk along the bank to see if he could find a shallow place. He never came to any, however, for the stream still appeared deep and dangerous, and wound in and out and round about in the most serpent-like manner, babbling all the time to itself in a laughing way, as if it was delighted at keeping Duldy from pursuing his journey.

Duldy grew very angry, and tried to leap across, but when he was preparing for a spring, the stream broadened out into a wide river, and seeing that, however far he jumped, he would never land on the opposite bank, he wisely abandoned the attempt.

Then it suddenly struck him that the stream must be

HE SAW THE FORM OF THE WATER-FAERY GLIMMERING GHOSTLY UNDER THE THIN WHITE VEIL

Foamina, who did not want him to leave the forest, so he determined to find out if it was really her, for he could not believe that it was only a common stream. In order to invoke her to appear, he stood still, and, lifting up his voice, sang these words:

"'Tis I whom thou hearest;
If thou art my dearest,
And loved me and kissed me when I was a child,
I'll leave thee for ever,
Return to thee never,
If thou wilt appear not, in woman shape mild."

No sooner had he sung these words than a great jet of foam spouted up from the stream, scattering him all over with cool spray, and in the centre he saw the form of the water-faery glimmering ghostly under the thin white veil. She tossed her arms aloft, sending a shower of water-drops to sparkle in the moon, shining like jewels, and sang in answer:

"River king's daughter,
Here thou hast brought her,
From the cool water;
She smiles on thee, dear.
Throw but a kiss to me,
It will be bliss to me,
If you do this to me,
A maid I'll appear."

On hearing this, Duldy kissed his hand towards the tall white column of foam, whereupon it vanished, and in its place stood a slender, beautiful woman in an azure robe girdled with white water-lilies, the same flowers also being entwined in her golden hair, which fell in great waves down to the ground.

On seeing this beautiful faery with the profusion of golden tresses, Duldy could only stare, whereupon she came forward with a smile and took his hand. Her touch was bitterly cold, and he shivered in the chilly atmosphere which she seemed to spread around her.

"Are you Foamina?" asked Duldy cautiously.

"Yes, I am the Spirit of the River," she replied, nodding her golden head. "Why do you wish to see me?"

"Because I want to leave the forest," said Duldy quickly.

"I know you do," cried Foamina, with a laugh which sounded like the ripple of water; "but you'll never do so; I'll foam round you like a brook, and you'll never be able to jump across."

"But why will you do so?" asked the shepherd.

"Because I love you—I love you!" she murmured, bending towards him; "and I won't let you go to the Princess."

"But I want to waken the Princess with a kiss."

"I know you do," said Foamina again; "but you'll never kiss her—even if you did it would be no good. I plunged her into that magic sleep by my enchantments, and she'll never awaken until you promise to marry me."

"Oh, I'll never do that!" exclaimed Duldy.

"Very well; then she'll sleep on for ever," said the Water-witch, laughing cruelly, while the air round her grew bitterly cold, and the yellow locks of her hair and the blue folds of her robe seemed to undulate over her lovely form like waves of water.

"Then, as you won't let me leave the forest, I suppose I must stay here," said Duldy in despair.

"Yes, unless you promise to marry me," replied Foamina tenderly.

"In that case I'll remain here for ever," cried Duldy angrily; "and as it's so cold, I'll light a fire."

"No, don't do that," said the Water-witch, shivering; "I don't like fire,—a cruel, hot thing which burns me up."

"I don't care," retorted Duldy, beginning to collect sticks for his fire; "I'm not going to perish with cold for your sake, especially when I don't love you."

"I'll put your fire out," cried Foamina in a rage.

"Oh no, you won't," replied Duldy coolly; "I won't let you. Besides, I can talk to you much more comfortably when I'm warm."

Foamina stood sulkily on one side as Duldy lighted his fire; for, in spite of her threat, she was so afraid of the flames that she dared not approach them. Very soon the shepherd had a large fire blazing away merrily, and the red glare lighted up the sombre branches of the trees and the beautiful face of Foamina, who retired to some little distance when the fire began to burn, singing a strange, sweet song :—

"Fire red,
Thee I dread;
Water blue,
I love you;
Fire—water
Maketh hotter;
Water—fire
Makes expire."

Now, while she was singing, and Duldy was warming himself at the bright flames, a small brown lizard came creeping out of a bunch of ferns and ran across the open space between Foamina and the shepherd.

As soon as the witch saw it, she flung herself on to it with a wild cry, and dissolved into a wide pool of seething foam, apparently trying to drown the lizard. But Duldy, who was kind to all animals, put his hand into the foam and picked up the lizard, which was nearly dead amid the angry water. He put it on the ground near the fire, but the white foam rolled forward right to the edge of the flames, so the poor lizard had no choice but to be drowned or burned, and Duldy put out his hand once more to save it from the cruel witch. To his dismay, however, the lizard, finding itself hard pressed by the foaming waves of the pool, ran into the fire and hid itself among the burning embers; upon which the water retreated with an angry cry, and spouted up into a snow-white column, out of which stepped Foamina in a fearful rage.

"Why did you not let me kill him?" she cried, throwing some cold spray over Duldy. "I wanted to drown him."

"The poor lizard was not hurting you," replied Duldy, laughing.

"It was not a lizard!" shrieked Foamina, stamping her foot. "It was my great enemy Salamander, and you saved him, stupid."

"I don't think so," said Duldy, pointing to the fire. "Salamander ran in there, so he must be burned to a cinder by this time."

"No, he isn't!" cried the Water-witch, coming nearer; "that is where he lives! but I'll put the fire out—I'll put the fire out and drown him!"

She dissolved once more into a wave of foam, and, rolling forward, flung a great sheet of water over the fire. Duldy expected to see the fire go black out, but instead of that it shot up into a tall column of red flame, and he hastily arose, afraid of being burned by the fierce heat. The wave of foam recoiled with an angry hiss, and, changing into a turbulent brook, flowed away through the forest with fretful murmurings, leaving not a trace behind on the smooth green lawn.

"I'm glad she's gone," said Duldy, with a sigh of relief. "Now, perhaps, I'll be able to go on to the Princess."

"You shall," said a clear voice behind him; "and I shall help you."

Duldy turned, and saw the tall column of flame still glowing fiercely red. Afterwards it changed to a beautiful rose colour, and out of it there stepped a handsome youth of his own height and age, dressed in a short red tunic, with golden sandals, and a flashing band of jewels bound round his head. His face was as bright as the sun, and under his skin Duldy could see a rosy flushing, as though fire was burning inside him, while under his feet were the dull red embers and flickering flames.

"I am Salamander," said the youth, with a smile. "You saved me as a lizard from my greatest enemy, the Fairy of Water, and now I am going to reward you."

"By waking the Princess?" asked Duldy eagerly.

"No; you must do that," said Salamander, laughing, "but it will take something more than a kiss to wake her. Listen. Foamina is in love with you, and when you said you loved the Princess Elsa, she revenged herself by plunging her into a magic sleep. She did this by sending to King Arago a golden fountain, and when it was set up in the palace, the water which spouted out of it sent the Princess Elsa to sleep by spreading the odour of poppies through the rooms. This odour affects no one but the Princess, so, in order to release her from the spell, you must make a fire of pine cones and sprinkle on the flames some of this powder, then you will see what happens."

"Oh, thank you!" cried Duldy, taking a small gold box from Salamander. "And will I be King?"

"If you wake the Princess, you certainly will be King after Arago dies," said Salamander; "but you have a stronger claim to the throne than by marrying the Princess. Do what I tell you, and you'll find out the secret of your birth."

"I'll go at once," said Duly joyfully, picking up his bundle and stick.

"One word," observed Salamander, as Duldy turned to go. "On your way to Aurea, do not let any water of stream, river, pool, or brook touch you, or Foamina will get you into her power again."

"I'm afraid I am in her power now," said Duldy mournfully. "I've got the foam-ring on my wrist; cannot you take it off?"

"I cannot," said Salmander, shaking his head; "but the Princess will be able to do that. Foamina will be very angry

when you marry the King's daughter, and will try to do you mischief. If she does, call on me, and I'll help you."

He stepped into the rosy-coloured column again, which immediately changed to a fiery red, and sank lower and lower until it vanished in the ground, when Duldy saw to his surprise that his fire had also vanished, the grass being as smooth and green as if no fire had been lighted at all.

Delighted at having things made so smooth for him, Duldy went on through the forest on his way to Aurea, but, remembering Salamander's command, he was careful to let no water touch him. Many streams lay across his path, but he either jumped over them or clambered over by the trunks of trees, and when he got down to the plain he crossed all the rivers by the bridges. Looking back, he saw the great white peak of the mountain flashing like a jewel in the blue sky, and the green forests encircling its base like emerald waves, but he espied nothing of Foamina, so trudged merrily along on his way to release the Princess Elsa from her enchantment.

II.

THE FOUNTAIN OF JEWELS.

AFTER travelling for some days, Duldy at last arrived, footsore and weary, at the gate of Aurea. It was the entrance to a long stone bridge which crossed the river, encircling the city, and at the farther end was another gate which opened into the principal street. Duldy entered under the wonderfully carved archway, and looked open-mouthed at the smart soldiers on guard, whose

red uniforms were all bedizened with gold lace, and who wore helmets of the same metal. To be sure, the good people of Aurea did not think much of gold, as they had such quantities of it, but Duldy, having been brought up very simply in his forest home, was quite amazed at the glare and glitter around him.

All the houses were built of white marble, with latticed windows of yellow gold, and in the centre of the principal square, which was at the end of the great street, a tall slender column of marble wreathed round with bands of gold soared aloft in the clear air. The floor of the square was also of white marble, with four fountains, one at each corner, which threw up jets of sparkling water in shining profusion. Indeed, there seemed to be a great deal of water about this marvellous city; it ran down the sides of every street, it rushed out of the mouths of lions' heads of white marble fastened to the walls, and in the centre of some of the squares were great still pools, encircled by marble rims, flashing like mirrors in the sunlight. Flowers! flowers everywhere!—wreathed round the houses, growing by the fountains, and all the people who passed by Duldy wore chaplets on their heads. White pigeons were flashing through the still air, and the whole city was perfumed with the scent of myriad blossoms. Oh, really it was a wonderful city, and Duldy, looking shabby and dusty in his simple dress, seemed rather out of place among all this magnificence. His face and form, however, were so noble that an old white-haired man who was passing turned back to speak to him.

"Fair youth," he said in a thin, piping voice, "why do you look so tired and dusty? have you not yet tasted of the hospitality of our city?"

"No," replied Duldy quietly; "I have been too much astonished at the beauties of this place to ask yet for hospitality. I have come to cure the Princess."

The old man shook his head sadly.

"Ah, many have come to cure the Princess, but none have yet succeeded; for not doing so they lost their heads; so do not try, my son, or maybe you will fail, and your comely golden head will be cut off."

"Oh, I'm not afraid," said Duldy, laughing. "I know all about this magic sleep, and will certainly succeed in awakening her, although the others have failed. But tell me, why does the King promise his throne to the person who cures Princess Elsa; has he no son?"

"None," answered the old man, whose name was Onaro. "The Princess Elsa is his only child. You are a stranger here, I take it, so perhaps do not know how the King Arago came to the throne,"

"No, I do not."

"Then I will tell you," said Onaro; "it will show you how merit sometimes succeeds. The last King had the misfortune to be loved by the Water-witch Foamina, who dwells on the summit of the great mountain of Kel. He refused her love, and in revenge she drowned his queen and only son when sailing in a boat. The King was so overcome with grief at the loss of his wife and child that he died, and as there was no one of the blood royal to succeed him, the citizens elected the prime minister, Arago, to be king, and their choice was very wise; but as he is not of royal blood, none of the neighbouring princes will marry his daughter, so King Arago

has promised her hand and his throne to the lucky youth who awakens her from this long sleep."

"But are you sure the young prince was drowned?' asked Duldy, who remembered how he had been found on the banks of the river Foam.

"Some say he was, others that he was not," said Onaro, shaking his head. "I do not know; but it is fabled that the enchantress Foamina carried him off with her to her mountain home, but I know not if this be true."

"How long ago was the Prince lost?" asked the shepherd breathlessly.

"Just seventeen years ago," replied Onaro; "and he was a year old then, so if he had lived he would now be eighteen years of age."

"My age," thought Duldy, with great exultation. "Perhaps, after all, I am the Prince stolen by Foamina;" but he was too wise to say this aloud, lest the King should hear of it, and hang him for high treason.

"As you look tired, you had better come to my house," said Onaro in a kind voice.

"No, thank you," replied Duldy, "I'm in too great a hurry; but please tell me how to reach the palace of the King."

"Go straight on, and you will find it at the end of the street," said Onaro; "but if you are wise you will not go."

He spoke these last words to the empty air, for Duldy, as soon as he heard where the palace was to be found, darted up the street like a swallow, so Onaro turned away sighing, thinking that Duldy would soon lose his head, like the rest who had come to cure the Princess.

But Duldy had no idea of losing his head, for it was a very wise head, and useful to him, seeing he could never get another; besides, feeling sure that Salamander would not deceive him, he determined to follow out his instructions about the fire of pine cones and the magic powder.

He soon reached the palace, which was built of dazzling white marble on an elevation at the end of a square, and was approached by a splendid staircase with statues of beautiful women on either side. Duldy looked at the glittering building, with its great towers and pinnacles of gold, its innumerable slender pillars, its golden lattices, and the great dome swelling against the blue sky like an enormous white soap bubble. All this matchless building blazed in the hot sunshine with such splendour that his foot faltered as he placed it on the lowest step, and thought what a poor unknown lad he was to dare such a quest. But the remembrance of the Princess, and the half belief he had in his own royal birth, gave him courage, and he raced lightly up the steps, never halting until he stood at the top, looking down on the wonderful city of white marble and gold spread out before him.

Then he turned and went into a large hall, through the mighty doors, which were of sandalwood, all curiously diapered with gold.

"What do you want?" asked a soldier who was on guard at the door.

"To see the King and cure the Princess," said Duldy boldly.

The soldier burst out laughing, and, calling to his comrade, whispered in his ear, whereupon they both looked pityingly at Duldy.

"You'll never succeed," they said.

"I'll try, anyhow," replied Duldy, taking off his cap to a gorgeously-dressed officer who approached. The soldiers told the officer what Duldy wanted, the officer told the groom of the chambers, the groom of the chambers told the prime minister, and the prime minister told the King; whereupon Duldy was ordered before the monarch, who sat upon his throne in the great Hall of Audience.

A splendid hall it was, all of white marble, with a roof of fretted gold, and rich curtains of pale blue velvet hanging between the slender pillars. The throne of solid gold flashed like a jewel, and Duldy's feet sank in the soft velvet carpets as he stood before the King, a royal-looking man with a crown of silver, for in Aurea silver was thought to be much more precious than gold. But Duldy did not look upon the King, as his attention was fixed upon a great golden fountain in the centre of the hall, out of which spouted the most beautiful coloured water, which first ascended and fell into the topmost basin like liquid silver, then fell from the first to the second basin a sheet of gold, from the second to the third a beautiful crimson tint, from the third to the fourth a bright blue, and from the fourth to the lowest and last a pale green colour. All these different coloured waters glittered like gems in the sunlight which came through the wide windows of the hall, so that the fountain was called the Fountain of Jewels, and Duldy guessed it to be the one which Foamina had sent to the King.

Meanwhile Arago was rather angry at Duldy staring at the fountain instead of himself, for no king likes to be neglected, so he called out to him in a loud voice,—

"Well, my lad, what do you want?"

"To cure the Princess, sire," said Duldy, quickly turning to the throne.

"You know the penalty if you fail?" said Arago, looking at him steadily.

"Yes, I lose my head."

"Are you not afraid?"

"No, not a bit; but if I succeed, of course I marry the Princess Elsa, and succeed your Majesty on the throne of Metella," said Duldy frankly.

"We have passed our royal word that such will be the case," replied the King, smiling. "Now, begin at once and awaken the Princess."

"First of all, I must have the Princess brought into this hall," declared the shepherd.

"Impossible!" said Arago, frowning; "my daughter is asleep on a couch in her bedroom."

"Then she must be brought here, couch and all," said Duldy boldly, determined to have his own way; "I can only break the spell here."

"How so?" asked the King.

"Because the Princess Elsa's sleep is caused by that fountain," said Duldy.

"What! the Fountain of Jewels!" cried the King. "That's nonsense; it was sent to me by the Queen of Faeryland, and she would not send me anything hurtful."

"I daresay *she* would not," said Duldy, with emphasis; "but she did not send that fountain. It came from Foamina."

"From Foamina!" cried every one, with a start of terror, for the water-faery was much dreaded in Aurea.

"This is very serious," said the King gravely. "Young man, you must prove the truth of what you say, and if such is the case, I shall have the fountain removed."

"Then bring in the Princess," said Duldy, and, kneeling down, he opened his bundle, which was full of pine cones he had picked up in the forest. "I must have your Majesty's permission to light a fire with these on the marble floor."

"Very well," said Arago, nodding his head; "only take care you don't spoil the pavement."

Duldy laughed, and while some of the courtiers went out to bring in the Princess, he removed a portion of the carpet, then piling up the pine cones in a little heap, he set them on fire. While he was doing this, the waters of the fountain kept changing to all sorts of colours, and at last every tint faded into a bright yellow, which looked like liquid gold, and breathed a strong perfume, nearly sending Duldy to sleep. However, he pinched himself to keep awake, and attended to his fire, which was now glowing red-hot, while the King and the courtiers all looked on with great curiosity, being much astonished at the change of the Fountain of Jewels.

The Princess was brought in, sleeping on her couch of purple, with a cloth of gold coverlet thrown over her, and she looked truly beautiful, with her black hair falling in disorder over the couch, and her rose-tinted cheek supported by one hand, while the other was pressed on her faintly beating heart. Duldy fell more in love with her than ever, but, suppressing all outward signs of his passion, he ordered her couch to be placed midway between the fire and the throne.

The pine cones were now a small heap of red-hot embers,

so Duldy took out the golden box given to him by Salamander, and began to sing, while he sprinkled some of the powder from the box upon the fire,—

"O my lovely Princess sleeping,
By the spells of evil chained,
At thy side I'm vigil keeping,
Longing, hoping, smiling, weeping,
While the day hath slowly waned.

In thy sleep are visions gleaming,
Faery visions from above,
Yet tho' lovely be thy dreaming,
All these visions are but seeming,
Wake once more to life and love.

Lovely Princess, I have found thee
Sleeping like a night-closed flower,
Of my heart I queen have crowned thee,
So tho' evil spells have bound thee,
Laugh to scorn all magic power."

Duldy now emptied all the powder on the fire, and a thick violet mist arose, which, trailing along the floor like a sinuous serpent, writhed across to the fountain and commenced to coil around it. Coil after coil it curled around, till it reached the topmost basin, so that the whole fountain could not be seen, but only the slender jet of water which shot out of the violet mist like the yellow horn of a trumpet lily. Duldy, waving his arms towards the fountain, began to sing again,—

"I have found her—long I've sought her,
To my heart this maid I take.
Cease thy spells, O river-daughter,
Vanish, fountain—vanish, water,
Let my Princess fair awake."

At this the yellow jet shot up as high as the fretted ceiling of the hall, and then sank down till it vanished in the violet mist, which began to whirl round and round, growing smaller and smaller, sinking at every whirl till it vanished altogether, and with it the fountain, leaving nothing but the bare white gleaming marble floor. But the Princess still slept on, although Duldy could see a faint flutter of her eyelids, which showed she was awaking, so, bending forward, he kissed her red lips three times, and sang once more,—

"Now the end of all things this is,
Thou art free from magic snare.
Life for thee hath many blisses,
Words of love and endless kisses.
Ope thine eyes, O maiden fair."

At this the beautiful Princess opened her eyes, and looked long and steadily at Duldy, then, rising to her feet, she smiled, and flung her white arms round his neck.

"It is the face of my dreams," she sighed. "Oh, my love, I have waited for thee long years!"

So the spell was broken, for the Princess had awakened, to the delight of King Arago, who descended from his throne and joined her hand to that of Duldy.

"I will keep my word," he said gaily. "You have released not only the Princess, but all of us, from the power of Foamina, so you will be married at once, and to-night I'll give a great ball in honour of you both."

Oh, how everybody cheered, and the courtiers ran hither and thither, telling the good news to one another. The city was in a great state of excitement, and all the poor people were

given plenty of food to eat. Duldy led his Princess to her room, and then retired in order to dress himself in his wedding clothes, while the people cheered in the city, the joy bells rang out, and even Foamina in her mountain solitude heard the cry, "Long live Prince Duldy!"

III.

THE SECRET OF DULDY'S BIRTH.

You may be sure Foamina was very angry when she heard the rejoicings in the city of Aurea, for by her magic power she knew that in spite of all her enchantments Duldy was going to marry the Princess. She was sitting on a couch of snow high up on the mountain of Kel, and the moon was shining down on her as she looked far across the plain to the illuminated city, where Duldy was being married to Elsa. As she thought of this, Foamina arose quickly, stamping her foot with rage, so that a great mass of snow came thundering down the side of the mountain and crashed through the green trees.

"I won't let him be happy!" cried Foamina in a rage, "he still has the foam bracelet on his wrist, so I'll part him from his Princess yet, in spite of Salamander and his threats."

So she flung herself off the snow bed and poured down the valley in a torrent of angry foam. First she went to the faery of one stream, and then to the faery of another—making them promise that they would roar like torrents down the mountain, through the plain, and make the great river round the rock

upon which Aurea was built rise higher and higher till it flooded the whole city. They all promised gladly, for they were very much afraid of offending Foamina, who was a very malignant faery, and could do them all harm.

Then the Water-witch flowed away through the plain to the great river, and, rising up in the principal fountain of the city, she spoke to all the streams and fountains of the city, in order to make them pour out as much water as they could to drown the city, and this they promised to do, so Foamina was now quite satisfied she would be revenged upon Duldy and Salamander for destroying the Fountain of Jewels and awaking the Princess Elsa.

At the palace all was festivity and rejoicing, and the King was giving a great ball in honour of the marriage; for Duldy and the Princess were now married, and sat on two golden thrones, looking wonderfully handsome and happy. Below them on the marble floor all the lords and ladies were dancing the most graceful dances in the world, and the musicians placed up in a high gallery sang and played the most delightful music, while tables covered with nice tarts and cakes and other beautiful things ran down on each side of the hall.

But notwithstanding that Duldy had married the Princess, and was going to be king when Arago died, he felt quite unhappy, as the foam bracelet still clasped his wrist.

"What is the matter, Prince?" asked Elsa, putting her beautiful white arms round his neck; "you look so sad."

"I'm afraid of Foamina," said Duldy, showing Elsa his wrist. "Look at the foam bracelet chaining my wrist; I cannot get it off. Look, you can see it quite plainly."

And indeed they could, a slender ring of white foam which clasped his wrist so tightly that Duldy felt as though it were the hand of the enchantress grasping him, to drag him away from his lovely bride to the depths of her cold pool.

"Is it cold?" asked Elsa.

"Yes, very cold," replied Duldy disconsolately. "I wish I could take it off."

"I think I can do that," said the Princess, laughing. "If it's cold, it will soon melt away under my warm kisses;" and so saying, she bent down and kissed his wrist three times with her red lips. Much to Duldy's surprise, at the first kiss the foam bracelet seemed to grow loose, at the second it fell off his wrist and lay on the floor like a white ring, and at the third it vanished with a loud noise.

Duldy was overjoyed that he was now free from the power of the enchantress, and led the Princess out on to the balcony which overlooked the river. It was a beautiful night, and Duldy saw the great white peak of Kel shining against the dark blue sky, and the heaving waters of the river at his feet. Just as he kissed the lips of his Princess, a confused noise sounded from the city below. The river, lashing itself into angry waves, began to rise, and as Duldy and the Princess, full of dismay, retreated to the hall, a crowd of people rushed in and stopped the dancing.

"Sire! sire!" they called out to the King, "the river is rising round the city, and all the fountains are spouting foam! We are lost! we are lost!"

Everything was in confusion, people rushing here and there shrieking and crying, while the lights of the city died out, and

the cruel, dark waters kept on rising, until every one thought the whole city would sink beneath the flood.

Duldy knew it was the work of Foamina, and his mind was quite satisfied on that point when a great white wave of foam rolled into the hall over the balcony. On this the Water-witch was riding, singing loudly,—

"Give me my lover,
King's daughter, king's daughter,
Or I will cover
Your city with water."

The Princess shrieked and hid her face on Duldy's shoulder, while Arago and all the people around looked at the witch in dismay. Suddenly Duldy recollected how Salamander had promised to help him, so he called out,—

"Salamander,
O, withstand her!
She has brought her
Cruel water.
Drive from land her,
Salamander!"

The witch laughed loudly, and the wave rolled on, amid the lamentations sounding from the city below, when suddenly, in the place where the Fountain of Jewels had been, a tall flame shot up, and out of it flashed Salamander, glowing like a beautiful crimson star.

"Foamina, beware!" he cried, shaking a torch which he held in his hand; "or I will burn up your springs, scorch your forests, and crush you for ever."

"No, you won't," said Foamina, flinging her white arms aloft. "This shepherd is mine—mine! and you can do nothing."

"Can't I?" cried Salamander, waving his torch. "Behold!"

There was a great roar, like the report of a thousand cannons, and every one looked through the open window with a cry of alarm.

Far away, from the snowy peak of Kel shot a tall column of red flame, with a black cloud above it spreading over the midnight sky, and vividly bright streams of burning lava began to run down the white snow like veins of fire.

"Oh, my springs, my springs!" shrieked Foamina wildly; "they will all be burned up, and I'll die—I can't put that fire out."

"No, you cannot," said Salamander sternly; "nor will I till you give up all claim to Duldy."

"I do! I do!" shrieked the Water-witch, listening with terror to the roar of the fire mountain.

"And tell Duldy who he really is?" said Salamander relentlessly.

"Yes! yes!" cried Foamina, who was now getting thinner and thinner as the hot lava scorched her springs in the distant mountain. "Only stop that cruel, cruel fire!"

"Who am I?" asked Duldy. "Quick! tell me, and Salamander will stop the fire."

"You are the son of the old King," cried Foamina wildly. "I drowned your mother and carried you off. I surrender all claim to you now, only stop the fire—stop the fire!"

"You will never do cruel things again?" said Salamander.

"Never!—never!" said the Water-witch, who was now writhing on the floor.

"Then make the waters leave the city," cried Duldy.

The Water-witch flew to the window and muttered some

words, whereupon the river sank down to its usual level, all the fountains stopped pouring out jets of foam, and in a short time the city was as dry and clean as if no waters had been there at all.

"Now go!" cried Salamander, and stretched out his torch towards the mountain. Immediately the column of fire sank back again, the smoke vanished and nothing could be seen but the snow-white peak, the dark blue sky, and the serene moon. As soon as Foamina saw this, she gave a cry of joy, and, flinging herself in a foaming torrent from the window, vanished in the river, and was never seen again.

Then Salamander turned to Duldy and Arago, who stood near, delighted with the defeat of the Water-witch.

"You heard what Foamina said," he observed to Duldy; "you are the son of the old king, and ought to reign now."

"And so he shall," cried Arago, taking off his beautiful silver crown and placing it on Duldy's head. "I will give up the throne to Duldy and my daughter, and become prime minister once more. Hail, King Duldy!"

"No, he must not be called Duldy," said Salamander, smiling, "but by his father's name. So, Hail, King Sama!"

Then all present, including Arago, kneeled down before Duldy, who ascended the throne with his silver crown, and his beautiful Queen Elsa by his side.

"Be happy," cried Salamander; "you have a kind heart, and that always brings happiness."

Whereupon he vanished, and was never more seen again, nor did he allow the mountain of Kel to breathe fire any more. So King Sama and Queen Elsa ruled over the land of Metella, and

were very, very happy, and were guided by the advice of Arago, who once more became prime minister.

Duldy brought Dull and Day from the forest, and gave them a beautiful palace to live in, but they did not like the city life, and went back again to their cottage, where they died after many years.

So Duldy became king after all, but while his people hailed him as King Sama, his beautiful wife called him nothing but Duldy, the shepherd lad who had released her from the enchantment of the Water-witch.

MOON FANCIES

THERE was once a girl called Lurina, who dwelt with her parents in a cottage on the edge of a great forest, which was said to be enchanted. She was an only child, and her parents, whose names were Panus and Cora, were very fond of her, although she certainly gave them a great deal of trouble. Not that she was naughty in any way, for no one could have been better or more obedient; but she was generally very dull and sleepy all the day, and only woke up at night-time, when she liked to wander outside in the moonlight, instead of going to bed. This habit led her parents to think she had faery blood in her veins, and, although Panus was a dull, stupid man, he nevertheless remembered how very peculiar his old grandmother had been in her actions.

Another curious thing was that Lurina had been born just at full moon, which is the time when all the faeries hold their great monthly festival, and Cora remembered hearing them singing a birth-song about little Lurina, who lay by her side. So there was no doubt but that the faery blood which flowed

in the veins of the old grandmother had missed a generation, and once more came out in Lurina. Panus and Cora therefore let her do just as she liked, which was the best thing they could do, as they had been told by a Wise Woman who lived near them.

Lurina was a most beautiful girl, with golden hair, a delicate white skin, and dark, dark eyes, which had a somewhat mournful look in their depths. When she arrived at the age of eighteen, a young woodman called Berl fell in love with her, and, after some hesitation, Lurina promised to become his wife, provided he let her do exactly as she pleased, and did not stop her night wanderings.

"You can go into the forest whenever you like," said Berl, kissing her; "but why do you not come when the sun is bright, instead of the feeble moonlight?"

"I don't like the sun," said Lurina, pouting, "it makes

everything so hot and disagreeable; but the moonlight is so soft and beautiful that I love it. Besides, you don't know what strange fancies come to me when the moon is shining."

"What kind of fancies?" asked Berl, who was a somewhat dull youth.

"Oh, all sorts of beautiful things," replied Lurina dreamily; "lovely little men and women dressed in green, who dance lightly on the emerald turf, and strange, sweet songs which sound like rushing water and the whispering of leaves. I dream about them when I'm in the wood, but nowhere else."

Berl was now convinced that Lurina had faery blood in her veins, and attended the festivals of the faeries, which she called moon fancies; but, being a very cautious man, he said nothing to Lurina; nevertheless, before he got married he consulted the Wise Woman.

She was really a very wonderful old woman, with snow-white hair and a form nearly bent double with age. She listened to Berl's story about Lurina's moon fancies, and then spoke in a harsh, determined voice.

"Your future wife has dealings with the faeries," she said, looking at Berl from under her bushy white eyebrows; "but what she sees at night in the forest are real truths, and not fancies as she thinks. My advice to you is not to marry her, lest evil befall you."

But Berl was too much in love with the beautiful Lurina to take this advice, so he said nothing, but asked Panus and Cora to let him marry their daughter at once, which they were very

pleased to do, for he was quite a rich man among the woodmen and, moreover, very good-natured.

The wedding-day arrived at last, and Lurina was married to Berl by the village pastor. Those who thought she had faery blood in her veins said she would never be able to enter the church ; but, much to their surprise, nothing unusual occurred at the ceremony, so they began to think Lurina was only a dull, stupid girl after all. This was a mistake, however, as you will soon hear.

Berl and Lurina took up their abode in a pretty cottage under the shade of a great oak, and lived very happily for a long time. Lurina was still dreamy and quiet all the day, but as Berl was generally at work in the wood, he did not notice it much. At night-time, however, she still wandered into the forest, especially when the moon was very bright, and this habit began to annoy Berl very much, but as he had given his word not to interfere with Lurina, he said nothing.

One night, however, when the moon was full, and the whole of the forest was bathed in the pale, cold light, he woke up, and, missing his wife from his side, knew that she had gone into the forest to indulge in her moon fancies. Berl sprang out of bed, and just caught a glimpse of her shadow disappearing among the trunks of the trees; so he rapidly slipped on his clothes and hurried after her, being determined to find out why she was so fond of these midnight wanderings.

"She's going to a meeting of the faeries," thought Berl, as he ran across the lawn. "I hope the little people won't be angry if they see me; but my wife will protect me."

For you must know that the faeries never like their revels gazed upon by mortal eye, and if they catch any one looking they pinch him black and blue; so Berl had good reason to be afraid of venturing into the enchanted wood at night.

He followed his wife cautiously, always keeping her in sight, but taking care she should not see him, when suddenly she crossed an open glade and vanished. Berl ran after her, but could find no trace of Lurina at all, and was quite disconsolate, when all at once he espied her sitting at the foot of a great beech tree, leaning against the trunk, with her beautiful face looking pale and white in the moonshine. Having watched her for a long time, he ventured to approach and call her by name, but, to his astonishment, she did not answer nor express surprise at seeing him, but simply stared across the glade with vague, unseeing eyes.

Emboldened by her silence, Berl ran up and fell on his knees with a little laugh, thinking she would scold him for having dared to follow her. He was perplexed, however, to see that she still did not seem to notice him, and when at last he took one of her hands, it was as cold as ice. Starting up in alarm, he looked closely at her, and found that she did not breathe—placed his hand on her heart, and discovered that it did not beat.

"Why, she's dead!" he cried in alarm. "Lurina, it is I, your husband, Berl."

Still Lurina did not answer. So, convinced she was dead,

Berl threw her body over his shoulder and hurried home. When he got inside, he did everything he could to revive her, but it was no use; the beautiful Lurina was dead, and Berl sat all night beside her body, weeping bitterly.

At the first red flush of dawn, he went from house to house, telling Lurina's parents and all the neighbours that his wife had died the preceding night in the forest. Every one came to Berl's house to see if it was true, and offer advice, which one's neighbours are very fond of doing. Among those who came was the Wise Woman, who surveyed the beautiful Lurina for some time in silence, then laughed loudly.

"Why do you laugh?" asked Berl, angry with her for doing so.

"I laugh at your folly," said the Wise Woman, looking oddly at him. "Lurina is no more dead than I am."

"But her heart is not beating, and she does not breathe," said Panus quickly.

"Nevertheless, she is not dead," replied the Wise Woman quietly. "Have you ever seen her like this before?" she added, turning to Cora.

"No, never," answered Cora, who was weeping bitterly.

"Ah! that is because you never followed her to the forest as Berl did," said the Wise Woman thoughtfully. "I told you, Berl, that your wife had faery blood in her veins, and you should have taken my advice about the marriage."

"Well, it's too late now to blame me," said Berl roughly, for he did not like to be reproached. "What am I to do?"

"I will tell you," observed the Wise Woman. "Come to my cottage at once."

So Berl left the body of his beautiful Lurina with her parents, and walked with the Wise Woman to her cottage, which was just on the verge of the wood, but protected from the entry of the faeries by a rusty horse-shoe fastened on the door.

When Berl entered, the Wise Woman drew a circle on the ground with her magic staff, whereupon a ring of pale flickering fire appeared; then she pulled seven hairs out of the tail of her black cat, and threw them into the midst of the circle, where they began to twist about in a most surprising manner. While they were doing this, the Wise Woman waved her staff seven times in the air, muttering strange words, and a white smoke arose from the centre of the fire circle where the hairs were jumping about. This white smoke went up like a white cloud, then suddenly vanished, and Berl saw a little man, all dressed in red, sitting in the centre of the circle.

"Well, what do you want?" he said graciously to the Wise Woman, whose bright eyes sparkled when she saw him.

"Why did Lurina die?" asked the Wise Woman. "Tell me, Pop."

"She's not dead at all," answered Pop quickly; "she is a faery, and went into the woods to attend the festival. As she

could not join the revels of Oberon in her human body, which would be too big, she left it behind, leaning against the trunk of a beech tree, and her faery body went to dance with the faeries. Of course, when Berl took her body away, she could not find it again when she returned, and she never will find it till it's brought back to the same place."

"What is to be done, then?" asked the Wise Woman.

"Berl must take Lurina's body back again from where he brought it," said Pop; "but before Lurina's faery body can come back to it, Berl will have to get permission for it to do so from Oberon.—Now let me go, I've told you all I know."

The Wise Woman waved her staff again, the white smoke came down on the little red man like an extinguisher, then everything vanished, and Berl found himself standing outside the door of the cottage, with the Wise Woman smiling at him.

"You heard what Pop said," she observed kindly; "you will have to go to the court of King Oberon, and ask him to let your wife come back."

"But will he do so?" asked Berl doubtfully.

"Ah, that I do not know," said the Wise Woman; "but as the faeries may treat you badly for looking at their festival, take this sprig of the rowan tree, and it will protect you. Don't forget to take Lurina's body back to the beech tree."

Berl took the sprig of rowan with its red berries that she handed to him, and walked away to his own cottage. He did not tell any one what the Wise Woman had said, but managed to put off all their questions by pretending to be too grieved to speak. So one after another the neighbours departed, until only Panus and Cora were left, and they, too, after kissing the pale lips of Lurina, went away, leaving Berl alone.

Berl waited impatiently for night to come, and as soon as the moon was glowing like glittering silver in the starry sky, he took Lurina up in his arms, and, carrying her into the forest, placed her in the same position as he had found her, leaning against the trunk of the beech tree.

When he had done this, he looked round perplexed, for he did not know how to find the faery court, but, taking out the rowan twig, he looked at it earnestly, wondering if it would by some magic means show him the way. But the rowan twig made no sign, and Berl put up the hand in which he held it to take off his cap and fasten it in it, when the twig happened to strike his ear, and immediately the silent forest became full of sounds.

He heard the most delightful music, then a burst of gay laughter, and, following the direction from whence they proceeded,

he came upon a wide open glade, with a smooth green sward upon which the moon was shining. Still, though he looked very hard, he could not see a faery; then, suddenly remembering how the rowan twig had bewitched his ears, he took it out of his hat, and pressed the red berries against his eyes. To his delight, he now saw that all the sward was covered with thousands of little men and women all dressed in pale green, and at the end was a throne of great white lilies, upon which sat the King and Queen of Faeryland. All round the glade were a circle of glow-worms,

whose pale lights illuminated the festival, and the bright moonlight pouring down through the boughs of the trees made everything as bright as day.

As soon as the faeries discovered that Berl could really see them at their revels, they shrieked with rage, and hundreds of the little green creatures swarmed up on his body to pinch him black and blue. Berl was in a great fright at first, till he suddenly remembered what the Wise Woman had said about the rowan sprig, so immediately called out—

"Magic branch of rowan tree,
Work the charm and set me free."

At once there was a dead silence, and all the faeries fell to the ground like withered leaves in autumn. Some of them ran to the throne of lilies, and spoke to the King, upon which Oberon stepped down, and, followed by a long train, walked up to Berl and commanded him to sit down. Berl did so, and then Oberon struck the ground with his wand, whereupon a great red rose sprang up, in which he took his seat with Queen Titania, while the other faeries gathered round and prepared to listen.

"Now, mortal," said Oberon in a dignified manner, "how is it that with an earthly eye you have beheld the unseen revels of the faeries?"

'It was by this rowan twig, your Majesty," said Berl, showing Oberon the sprig; "the Wise Woman gave it to me as a protection, in case the faeries should be angry."

"We are only angry with evil-disposed people," said Oberon gently; "and if you come here with a pure heart, no one will harm you. What do you want with us?"

"I want my wife Lurina," said Berl boldly.

There was a cry of astonishment at this. Suddenly a faery flew forward on emerald wings, and, as she stood before Oberon, Berl saw that it was Lurina.

"Yes, your Majesty," said the faery Lurina, "I am his wife, but he lost me through his curiosity, as your Majesty knows. I was exiled from Faeryland many years ago, and condemned to dwell in a human body. I lived in Lurina's body, but was allowed by the Queen to join in the faery revels at night. I told my husband not to follow me, but he did so, and found my human body lying as if dead under the beech tree, because

I had left it to attend the festival. When I went back, I could not find it, so had to stay in the forest all day as a faery."

"Is this true?" asked Oberon, turning to Titania.

"Perfectly true," answered Titania. "It was I who punished Lurina by exiling her from Faeryland, but now I think she is punished enough, and, as she has lost her human body through no fault of her own, she is pardoned."

On hearing these words, the faery Lurina dropped on her knees and kissed the Queen's hand, then flew off to be congratulated on her good luck by her faery friends. But Berl was not at all pleased to think he had lost his wife for ever, and spoke to the King.

"But what am I to do, your Majesty?" he said, with tears in his eyes. "I love Lurina very much, and don't want to lose her."

"There is only one thing to be done," said Oberon. "Have you brought back the human body of Lurina?"

"Yes, your Majesty; it's under the beech tree," replied Berl eagerly.

"Then I'll tell you what I'll do," said the King. "As the Queen has pardoned Lurina, of course she can't go back, as no faery likes to live in your world; but the faery Mala has been very naughty of late, so I will condemn her to inhabit your wife's body, and stay in exile until she is good enough to come back to court."

"But that won't be Lurina," said Berl.

"She will wear Lurina's body," replied Oberon, laughing; "and no one but yourself will be the wiser. Leave the forest at

once, and to-morrow morning you will see your wife come to the cottage door. Strike up, music!"

Whereupon the faery music began to play loudly—the blue bells rang merry chimes, the grasshoppers creaked gaily, and the wind commenced to sigh among the forest leaves.

Berl dare not disobey the King's command, and, after seeing Oberon return to the throne of white lilies, and all the faeries commence their dance again, he arose to his feet. As he did so, he accidentally dropped the rowan twig, which was snatched up by a faery at once, and then the whole of the faery revel vanished. Berl could see nothing of the dancing, nor hear anything of the music, but only beheld the smooth green lawn, the myriad trees around, and the round orb of the moon.

There was nothing left to do but to return home, which he did at once, and you may be sure he got very little sleep that night. At early dawn he was standing at his cottage door, looking towards the wood, when he beheld Lurina tripping gaily towards him, singing merrily. When she saw Berl, she flung herself into his arms.

"Dear Berl, here I am at last!" she cried, kissing him.

"But you are the faery Mala," said Berl, looking at her in perplexity.

"Who is the faery Mala?" asked Lurina, who had forgotten all about her faery existence now she was in a human body. "I never heard of her. I went into the forest and fell asleep, I suppose. When I awoke I came straight back to you."

Berl was a wise man, and said no more, but kissed his newly-recovered wife heartily, then called all the neighbours to congratulate him, which they did loudly.

When they told Lurina she had been dead, she declared it was nonsense, as it was only a sleep, and soon every one believed it except Berl and the Wise Woman, to whom Berl told all about his reception by Oberon.

Lurina became bright and gay all day, and never more wandered into the forest to indulge in moon fancies, so Berl thought the faery Mala must have been exiled altogether from Faeryland.

She was very good indeed, so good that Berl was quite afraid lest she should be called back to Faeryland, but as yet that has not happened.

THE ROSE-PRINCESS

I.

THE QUEEN WHO DID NOT BELIEVE IN FAERIES.

NCE upon a time there was a King and Queen who reigned over a most beautiful country. They were very rich and very happy, and lived in a most gorgeous palace, the grand gardens of which sloped down to the blue sea, on which sailed many richly-laden ships, carrying merchandise to the capital city of the kingdom.

The palace was built of silver and ivory, and adorned with pale blue velvet hangings, upon which were painted the most exquisite pictures in the world. It stood on a high green hill, and far below lay the immense city of Buss, with its wide streets, many towers, and glittering fountains. As the King and Queen looked down from their beautiful castle on to the mighty city and great green plains which surrounded it, they ought to have been happy, but, curious to say, they were not. They had everything in the world to make them happy except

one thing, and that one thing they longed for ardently, the more so because they did not see any chance of obtaining it.

"Ah, if I only had a child!" sighed the Queen.

"Yes; a little boy," said the King.

"Or a little girl," retorted the Queen. "Don't you know any faeries, my dear, who would gratify our one desire?"

"No," replied the King, shaking his head sadly. "My great-grandfather was the last person who ever saw a faery; no one has ever seen one since."

"I don't believe they exist," said the Queen angrily.

"Oh yes, they do," observed her husband. "This palace is said to have been built by faery hands."

"I don't believe they exist," declared the Queen again. "If they did, they would surely help me by giving me a little girl or boy. What's the good of faeries if they don't help you?"

"I wish they would help me," sighed his Majesty; "all my subjects are getting so unruly that I don't know but what there will be a revolution, and they'll put some one else on the throne."

"Who else could they find?" asked the Queen curiously.

"Oh, I'm not certain of that," replied the King. "You see, my grandfather, who was the first of our dynasty, ascended the throne by the help of the faeries, and the king who was deposed vanished, but they say some of his descendants live there;" and he pointed downward to the city.

"And there they will stay," said the Queen angrily. "I don't believe a word of it. Faeries indeed! they don't exist."

"But they do," persisted the King.

"Pooh!" replied her Majesty. "Pooh!"

Now, when the Queen said "Pooh!" her husband knew it was no use talking any more, so he retired to his cabinet to look over some petitions from starving people, while the Queen went down with the ladies-in-waiting to walk in the garden.

It was really a delightful garden, filled with the most wonderful flowers. There were great beds of scented carnations, glowing with bright colours, red and white foxgloves, in whose deep bells the faeries were said to hide, masses of snowy white lilies, and a great mixture of marigolds, hollyhocks, sweet-williams, daisies, buttercups, and dahlias, which made the whole ground look like a brightly-coloured carpet. And as for the roses—oh, what a quantity of charming roses there were growing there! Red roses, varying in colour from a deep scarlet to a pale pink; white roses looking like snowflakes; yellow roses that glittered like gold, and faintly-tinted tea-roses that perfumed the still air with their sweet odours. Oh, it was really a famous garden, and bloomed all the year round, for the kingdom was situated in the region of perpetual summer, where snow never fell and frost never came.

The Queen, whose name was Flora, wandered disconsolately about the garden, quite discontented with the beautiful flowers, because she could not obtain the wish of her heart. The ladies-in-waiting began to pluck flowers in order to adorn the royal dinner-table, and Queen Flora walked on alone towards a great white rose tree that was covered with blossoms. As she stood looking at it, she suddenly heard a tiny laugh, and a great white rose unfolded its petals, showing a golden heart, and also a dainty little faery dressed in delicate green leaves, with a crown of little white rosebuds, and a wand made of a blade of

grass. When the Queen saw her, she was much astonished, because she did not believe in faeries, but, now she really saw one, she had to believe her own eyes.

"I am called Rosina," said the faery in a sweet, low voice, "and I heard you say you did not believe faeries existed; now you see they do, because I am a faery."

"Yes, you must be a faery," replied the Queen, clasping her hands, "because no human being could be so small."

"Oh, I can be any size I please," said the Faery Rosina, with a laugh, and, stepping down from the rose, she alighted on the ground, and instantly grew as tall as the Queen herself.

"Oh, you are a real, real faery!" cried Flora in delight. "But why do the faeries not appear now?"

"Because the land is so badly governed," said Rosina in a severe tone. "Yourself and the King only think of luxury, and never of assisting the poor people; but I am going to cure you both of such neglect."

"But how?" asked the Queen, trembling.

"By giving you your wish," said the faery, plucking a white rosebud off the tree. "Lay this bud beside your bed to-night, and at the dawn of day it will change into a beautiful little baby Princess, which is what you want."

"Oh yes, yes!" cried the Queen; "I do want a Princess."

"Every night at sundown," said the faery slowly, "the Princess will once more change into a flower, and become a human being again at sunrise."

"But will she change like this all her life?" asked the Queen, in great dismay, for she did not like to have such a curious baby.

"She will be a Princess by day and a rosebud by night," said Rosina, smiling, "until she marries the great-grandson of the King whom your husband's grandfather deposed from the throne."

"And where is this Prince to be found?" demanded the Queen breathlessly. "I'll marry my Princess to him at once."

"You can't do that," said the faery, shaking her head. "The exiled Prince does not know who he is, and the Princess herself will have to tell him he is of the royal blood. When she does that, and you marry them to one another, the spell will be removed, and she will be a Princess both by day and by night."

"I don't see how she's ever going to find this lost Prince!" said the Queen angrily. "I shall certainly not let my child run about the world looking for him."

"Fate is stronger than you are," replied the faery, "and you will see what you will see." So saying, she suddenly disappeared, and, as the white rose slowly curled up its petals, the Queen knew the Faery Rosina was inside.

The ladies-in-waiting, who had seen the Queen talking to a strange lady, dared not approach before, but now they saw their royal mistress was alone, they ventured to come near, and one of them offered to take the white rosebud which the Queen held.

"Oh no!" cried Flora, hastily drawing back her hand; "I am going to keep this rosebud. It is my"—

She was going to say Princess, but, thinking it wiser to keep her own counsel, she held her tongue, and, on returning to the palace, told no one but the King about the faery's promise. The King laughed at her, and said he did not believe her story—that she must be dreaming; but the Queen persisted in her tale, that the rosebud would become a Princess, and placed it on a velvet cushion by the side of her bed.

Next morning, at the first break of day, she sprang up out of bed and hurried to look at the cushion, but there lay the rosebud a rosebud still, and not a Princess, as she thought it would be.

Queen Flora was very much disappointed, particularly as

the King laughed at her folly for believing she had seen a faery, when suddenly a shaft of golden sunlight shone through the window right on to the cushion, and in an instant, instead of the flower there appeared a beautiful naked baby, who laughed and crowed gaily.

The Queen was nearly mad with joy, and took the baby up in her arms to show the King, who was equally delighted.

"You see there are faeries after all," he said to the Queen.

"I always thought so," replied the Queen.

"Oh, my dear!" said the King, who was quite shocked at such a story.

"Pooh!" answered Queen Flora, tossing the baby up in her arms, and this ended the conversation.

II.

THE ROSE-PRINCESS IS LOST.

Of course there was great joy when it came to be known that Queen Flora was the mother of a lovely Princess, and all the bells in the city were set ringing, while the poor people, for once, had as much food as they could eat. The ladies of the Queen admired the beautiful baby very much indeed, and there was no doubt the little Princess was really a charming child. By the advice of the King, however, Queen Flora told nobody about the transformation which took place at sundown, and always put the Princess to bed herself every night. Then, as the sunlight died out of the western skies, the pretty baby would change into a delicate white rosebud, and rested on a velvet cushion beside the Queen's bed every night. At the first golden ray of the sun the bud changed to a beautiful Princess once more, and no one ever knew that she was only a flower transformed for the day into a human being.

As the years rolled on, the Rose-Princess grew into a tall, slender girl, with golden hair, blue eyes, and the most beautiful complexion, white and pink, flushed like a delicate rose. When she walked she swayed like a graceful lily, and always dressed

in a green gown with a girdle of white roses, which were her favourite flowers.

She also wore a silver circlet on her golden hair, upon which were fastened diamond roses and leaves made out of bright green emeralds, which made her look so beautiful that all who beheld her fell in love on the spot. Many princes heard of her beauty and wanted to marry her, but she did not care for any of her suitors, which pleased Queen Flora very much, for she was anxious her Princess should marry the great-grandson of the exiled King, and cease to change into a rosebud.

The King made a proclamation that if the descendant of the old dynasty came to the palace, he would marry his daughter and be heir to the throne; but no one ever came forward to claim the hand of the Princess, which showed that the Faery Rosina spoke truly when she said the exiled Prince knew nothing about his royal blood.

The Princess was christened Rose by the Queen, because she really was the offspring of the white rose tree, but her complexion was so delicate, and her love for roses so great, that every one called her the Rose-Princess instead of the Princess Rose.

Now, on the seventeenth birthday of the Rose-Princess, there was a mighty revolution in the city of Buss, and a great multitude of men and women marched to the palace in order to dethrone the King. He was not a bad King as kings go, but, not knowing how to govern, he did nothing but amuse himself with balls and fêtes, letting his courtiers govern as they pleased.

As the courtiers were all very greedy, and wanted money, they put such heavy taxes on the people, that at last the King's subjects could stand it no longer, and while a ball was taking place in the great hall of the palace, in honour of the Rose-Princess's birthday, the doors were burst open, and the mob rushed in. The ball was being given in the day-time, so that the Rose-Princess could attend, because, of course, she could not dance when changed into a flower. The music was sounding most beautifully, the King and Queen sat on their thrones with golden crowns, and the Rose-Princess was dancing gaily, when the noisy crowd of ragged men and women rushed into the beautiful palace.

Oh, it was really a terrible scene! All the gaily dressed lords and ladies were seized by the dirty hands of the people, and stripped of their beautiful jewels. The great mirrors were all smashed, the lovely blue hangings torn down and trampled on by the mob, the gorgeous gardens were all destroyed, and these rioters, breaking into the King's wine-cellars, began to drink the fine wine of which he was so proud.

All the women of the city collected a lot of velvet couches, gorgeous dresses, and rich curtains into a heap in the garden, and, setting fire to it, danced about in a ring, singing loudly—

"High to low
Down must go;
Low to high
Now must fly.
All the lords and ladies dead,
Let us eat their costly bread,
While beneath our feet we tread
Every proud and haughty head."

You may be sure the King and Queen did not wait to face these terrible people, but, disguising themselves in mean garments, fled from the palace, leaving all their beautiful things to be destroyed by the mob, who chose a President, and proclaimed a Republic, then began to kill all the lords and ladies they could find. The whole nation seemed to go mad, and there was no law or order anywhere, but every one did exactly as they pleased, so that the entire kingdom was brought to the verge of ruin.

And the Rose-Princess?—ah, poor lady! she also fled in dismay from the terrible people, and sought refuge in her own room. It was still early in the afternoon, so she could not change into a rose, and thus escape the fury of the mob; and, as her parents had deserted her, she stood trembling in her beautiful chamber, thinking she would be found and torn to pieces. Besides, being ignorant of her nightly transformation, she was afraid to go to bed, lest she should be killed while asleep.

As she stood weeping and wringing her hands in despair, she suddenly saw a tall handsome lady standing before her,

looking at her kindly. This was the Faery Rosina, who had come to save the Rose-Princess from the people, as it was not her fault that they had rebelled against the King.

"Do not weep, Rose-Princess," she said in a kind tone; "though things seem to be going wrong just now, they will all come right."

"But my dear parents!" cried the Rose-Princess, weeping.

"They have left the palace," said the faery in a severe tone, "and will now endure hardship, to punish them for the way in which they have neglected their office; but when they have learnt a lesson, they will come back again."

"But what will become of me?" cried the Rose-Princess, as the noise of the mob came nearer and nearer.

"You will be quite safe," replied the faery; "and the people who are now crying out to kill you, will soon be cheering you on your wedding-day, when you are married."

"Married to whom?" asked the trembling Princess.

"Ah, that you must find out!" answered the Faery Rosina, as the crowd commenced to batter at the door of the room. "But now I must save you from the people, or they will certainly kill you."

As she said this, she touched the Princess, who immediately changed into a white rosebud, and lay on the dark green carpet like a snowflake. Then the Faery Rosina vanished, and the door was burst open, as the mob rushed in.

Of course they now saw nothing, and never for a moment dreamt that the white rose lying on the carpet was their beautiful Princess, so they commenced to pull down all the

costly things in the room, and would have trampled the rosebud under their feet, only a young student picked it up.

He was a handsome fellow of twenty, this young student, with a slender figure and a dark, splendid-looking face. His name was Ardram, and he was one of the leaders of the revolt, although he did not wish the people to destroy everything as they were doing. Ardram was a very learned youth, and the son of a poor sick woman, of whom he was very fond. He had seen all the misery of the poor people who were in want of bread, and the sinful luxury of the court, so thought it but right that a change should be made. Therefore he led the people to the palace, to ask justice of the King, but they had become too strong for him, and he was already regretting that he had not let them stay where they were. However, it was too late now for regrets, but he determined not to take any part in the follies of the mob, so walked home to his own little room in the city, with the white rosebud in his button-hole.

All night long he saw the flames rising from burning dwellings, and heard the shrieks of people being killed, so he felt very sad to think that he was the original cause of it all, though he certainly had no intention of letting such things be done. Then he determined on the morrow to talk to the people, and try and persuade them to stop their plundering and cruelty, but, in the meantime, went to bed and slept for an hour in an uneasy manner.

He forgot all about the white rosebud, which had fallen on the floor, as he flung himself, dressed as he was, on his bed, but when he awoke in the morning, he was much surprised to find seated beside him a beautiful woman, who was weeping bitterly.

"Who are you?" asked Ardram, springing to his feet; "and how did you come here?"

"I am the Rose-Princess," she replied sadly; "but I do not know how I came here. You will let me stay, will you not? I am so afraid of those terrible people who broke into the palace."

"Oh, I won't let them harm you, Princess," said Ardram, who had fallen in love with her beautiful face; "but you must not leave this room, or else I cannot protect you."

"I'll stay here," said the Rose-Princess obediently; "but will you please give me something to eat?—I feel rather hungry."

So Ardram brought out some bread and wine, off which the Princess made a hearty meal, talking to her host all the time she was eating.

"I saw you in the palace yesterday," she said, looking straight at Ardram.

"Yes," replied the student, blushing; "I was with the people. We only wanted justice, and I did not think they would go on like they did. The people were too strong for me, so I left them."

"And will you put my father on the throne again?" asked the Rose-Princess eagerly.

"I'm afraid that will be impossible, Princess," said Ardram quietly, "unless he promises to govern better. You see, many years ago, a king was deposed for governing badly, and your grandfather was put on the throne—now they'll offer the crown to some one else."

"Perhaps they'll offer it to you?" suggested the Rose-Princess.

"I don't think so," said Ardram, laughing, as he arose to his feet; "but if I did become king, I would take care that all my subjects were well off. Now I'll go out, Princess, and you stay here."

"Very well," answered the Rose-Princess; "and do look for my parents."

"I will—though I daresay they've left the city," said Ardram, and he went away more in love with the Princess than ever.

Meanwhile the Rose-Princess was left alone, and thought how noble and brave Ardram was.

"If he was only the Prince I was to marry!" she sighed; "but then the faery said everything would come right, so, perhaps, he is to be my husband after all."

She waited all through the long day for the return of Ardram, but he did not return till sundown, and just as his hand was on the door, the Princess changed into a white rosebud, so, when he entered, he found the room empty.

"Princess, Princess, where are you?" he called out in alarm; but of course no Princess answered him, and Ardram asked every one in the house if they had seen a beautiful lady go out, but no one had done so.

"I'll go and see my mother," said Ardram in perplexity, for his mother was a very wise woman, although at present she was lying on a bed of sickness. As soon as Ardram made up his mind to ask his mother's advice, he put on his cap to go, when he spied the white rosebud on the floor.

"Hullo!" he cried, picking it up; "this is the rose I found in the palace yesterday—my mother is fond of flowers, so I'll take it to her;" and he went away.

The streets were quite full of people, all in a great state of excitement, for the King, Queen, and Princess had vanished, and, as all the ministers were beheaded, there was no one to rule, so the whole kingdom was in a dreadful state.

Ardram reached his mother's house, and found her in bed, very ill, but when she saw him she was much delighted.

"How are things going?" she asked, after he had kissed her.

"Very badly," replied Ardram; "no one is able to rule, and I'm afraid we will have a civil war."

"Oh no, we won't," said his mother quickly. "If the people won't have their present King, perhaps the exiled Prince of the old royal family will be found."

"I'm afraid not," replied her son, smiling; "but if he is, I hope he'll rule wisely."

"I hope so too," said his mother pointedly. "Who gave you that beautiful rose, Ardram?"

"I picked it up in the palace, mother," he answered, and, taking it out of his button-hole, he gave it to her to smell. Then he told her all about the beautiful Princess, and his mother was very much astonished that the poor lady had left

the safe shelter of his room, and perhaps been torn to pieces by the angry people in the street.

At last Ardram went away, leaving the rosebud with his mother, who laid it on her pillow and went to sleep. Next morning, when the beams of the sun were shining into her chamber, she awoke, and found the Rose-Princess sleeping beside her.

"Are you not the Rose-Princess?" she asked, for of course she recognised the King's daughter at once by her crown.

"Yes," answered the Rose-Princess quickly; "but how did I get here? The last thing I remember before I went to sleep, was standing in Ardram's room."

"You must have walked here in your sleep, then," said the sick woman, looking at her, "because he has been searching for you everywhere."

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" said the Rose-Princess, rising. "I would not like him to think I'd run away, because I am so fond of him."

"Are you fond enough of him to marry him?" asked the mother sadly.

"Yes, I am," answered the Princess, blushing; "but I'm afraid he would not marry me. Besides, you know, I am to marry the exiled Prince of the old royal family, as soon as he is found."

"He is found," said the sick woman quietly. "Ardram is my son, and the great-grandson of the King who was driven from the throne, so, if you marry him, he will be able to regain his throne again."

"And my father and mother?" asked the Princess in a faltering voice.

"I'm afraid they're not fit to reign, if all I have heard is true," said the mother in a melancholy tone; "and if you and my son, Prince Ardram, ascend the throne, I hope you will govern more wisely. Now, to prove the truth of what I say, pull out that wooden box from under my bed."

The Rose-Princess did as she was told, and, on lifting up the lid, saw a most beautiful crown, all over diamonds, and rubies, and great blue sapphires, sparkling like the stars.

"That is the old royal crown," said the sick woman, as the Princess put it on her head, "and Ardram will be crowned with it."

"But if your son is the Prince, why did you not send him to the palace to marry me?" asked the Rose-Princess, who looked truly royal, as she stood in the room with the great crown on her golden head.

"Because I wanted him to see the misery of the people, before ruling over them," said the mother quickly. "Now he knows what poor people endure, he will be a wise king, and govern well. Now, I will sleep until my son comes back, then we will see about getting you married."

So she turned her face away, in order to sleep, and the Princess put away the royal crown, and began to sing to the sick woman in a low, sweet voice. This is what she sang:

"Roses red, in the red, red dawn,
Open your hearts to the sun, I pray;
The dew lies heavy upon the lawn,
Westward rises the golden day.

Roses, droop in the hot noon-tide,
Scatter your petals of red and white,
Far in the depths of your green leaves hide,
Till to the eastward the sun takes flight.

Roses white, at the shut of day,
Close your blossoms thro' sunless hours;
The moon rides high in the sky so grey.
Night brings sleep to the weary flowers."

Then she also fell asleep, and, as night came on, she was once more changed into the white rosebud, and lay on the pillow beside the grey head of Ardram's mother. When the doctor, a gruff old man called Mux, came in, the sick woman awoke, and asked at once for the Princess.

"What princess?" asked Mux gruffly. "There's no princess here. So much the better, as I'd cut her head off if I saw her."

"But she was here when I went to sleep," said Ardram's mother angrily.

"Well, she isn't here now," retorted the doctor. "I expect she's left you to look for the King and Queen. But never mind about her—how do you feel yourself?"

But the sick woman was much agitated over the loss of the Rose-Princess, and when her son entered, she told him how the Princess had been with her all day, and again vanished; whereupon Ardram rushed out into the streets, to see if he could find the poor Rose-Princess again.

When Mux was taking his leave, Ardram's mother said she had no money to pay him.

"Never mind," said the doctor gruffly, for he was really very kind-hearted; "I'll take this rose as payment;" and he picked up the white rose off the pillow.

"It's very kind of you, doctor," said the sick woman gratefully. "Take the rose by all means—my son gave it to me. But, doctor, do try and find the Princess; if you do, I will reward you better than you think."

"Stuff!" said the gruff Mux; and he went away home with the white rosebud fastened in his coat.

III.

THE ROSE-PRINCESS FULFILS HER DESTINY.

GRUFF Dr. Mux took the white rosebud home with him, little thinking it was the lost Princess, which was perhaps just as well, seeing that he was such an enemy to the royal family. At least every one thought he was, but everybody was wrong to think so, as, in spite of the names he called them, he was really a great upholder of the throne, and in his humble house the exiled King and Queen had been hidden all the time of the revolution. No one thought of looking for them in the house of such a red republican as Dr. Mux, so they were as safe there as though they were guarded by stone walls and faithful soldiers.

When Dr. Mux arrived home, he went straight to bed, but arose very early in the morning, before the sun was up, and called the King and Queen.

"Sire and madam," he said, bowing before them, "as I came through the streets, I noticed that the people were talking about re-establishing the throne."

"Oh, then we will go back to our palace," said the Queen joyfully.

"And make an example of all traitors," observed the King sternly.

"Nothing of the sort, sire and madam," said the doctor, bowing again. "From what I heard, I think the people want to put your daughter on the throne."

"Nonsense!" said the King.

"Pooh!" said the Queen.

"You think so?" observed the doctor severely. "Listen."

They did listen, and heard a roar in the distance coming nearer and nearer, then a great mass of people came sweeping up the street, crying out, "Long live Queen Rose!" "Let us see our new Queen!" "Where is the Rose-Princess?"

"Ah, where indeed?" cried the Queen, weeping. "I have not seen our beautiful daughter since the mob attacked the palace."

"She would easily be recognised," said the doctor.

"I'm not so sure of that," replied the King, looking at the Queen. "You know our Princess is enchanted by the faeries."

"Faeries?" echoed the doctor; "I never saw one."

"But I did," said the Queen.

"Excuse me, my dear madam—dyspepsia," returned the doctor gravely, for you see he did not know how the Princess changed to a rosebud every night.

The Queen was very angry, but dared not say anything, lest the doctor should deliver her up to the mob, who were now surging in the wide street, listening to a man who was speaking.

"That is Ardram the student," said the doctor. "I saw his sick mother last night—she gave me this rosebud."

"Ah," sighed the Queen, as she took the rosebud from the doctor, "how like my poor lost daughter!"

"I do not see the resemblance, sire and madam," said the doctor; "but listen to Ardram;" and he went out of the room, leaving the King and Queen to hearken to the man who had taken their throne from them. He was talking in a loud tone to the mob, and telling them they ought to elect the Rose-Princess for their Queen, as she would know how to govern better than her parents. The sun was just rising, and the golden beams were shining on his face, so that he looked truly noble.

"A seditious traitor!" cried the King.

"Cut his head off!" said the Queen.

But they had not the power to do so, and, amid cries of "Long live Queen Rose!" Ardram leaped from his standing-place, and all the mob swept down the street to look for the lost Princess.

The King and Queen turned from the window in great anger, when they saw to their surprise that the Rose-Princess was standing in the room.

"My child, my child!" said the King, kissing her.

"It was your rosebud, then?" said the Queen, folding the beautiful girl in her arms.

"What rosebud?" asked the Rose-Princess in surprise; "and how did I come here?"

"The doctor brought you," said the King.

"Did he carry me through the streets?" asked the

Princess, very much astonished. "I wonder I was not recognised."

"No one could recognise you as you were then," said the Queen, and nodded wisely, but she did not tell the Princess that she had been a rosebud when she was carried by the doctor.

"I've had such a lot of adventures," said the Rose-Princess; "but I don't know how I came from one place to the other. First, I was in the palace, then in Ardram's room, then by his sick mother's bedside, and now here. It must be the faeries."

"It is the faeries," observed the Queen, kissing her daughter again. "You'll know all about it when you marry the exiled Prince, and break the spell."

"Oh, I can break whatever spell there is when I marry Ardram," said the Rose Princess; "he is the exiled Prince."

"Nonsense!" said the King, frowning.

"Pooh!" said the Queen in an angry tone.

"Oh, but he is," cried the Rose-Princess gaily. "I saw his crown, for his mother showed it to me."

"Then, if he is the real Prince," said the King, "you had better marry him, and break the enchantment."

"What enchantment?" asked the Rose-Princess.

"You will find it all out," began the Queen, "when"—

"When you marry Prince Ardram," finished the King.

All day the three royal people sat in the humble room of the doctor, and talked about their troubles. Rose-Princess told her parents all about the misery of the people, and how they ought to govern, but the King and Queen only laughed, which showed

that the severe lesson of exile was lost on them. Gruff Dr. Mux was very much astonished to see the Rose-Princess, and told her how she had been proclaimed Queen by Ardram.

"Then I'll marry him," said the Rose Princess promptly, "for I love him very much. Where is he?"

"Coming up the street," said the doctor. Then all four went to the window, and saw that the crowd of people were coming back, looking very disappointed because they had not found the Princess.

Ardram mounted on a great stone in front of the church door, for the cathedral of the city was just opposite the doctor's house. When the Rose-Princess saw him, she ran out of the room, down the stairs, and across to where the student was standing.

"Ardram, Ardram, I am here!" she cried, and climbed up beside him.

The people recognised their beautiful Princess at once, and cried out,—

"Long live Queen Rose!"

"And King Ardram," said the Princess loudly; "if you make me Queen, you must make him King, and we will both rule wisely."

"She never thinks of us," said her father.

"Ungrateful child!" cried the Queen.

But no one heard them, for the mob began to roar, "Long live King Ardram and Queen Rose!" and the red light of the setting sun shone on the handsome couple as they stood on the stone. Ardram was beside himself with joy, not at being made King, but because the beautiful Rose-Princess had her

white arms round his neck, and was saying how much she loved him.

Suddenly the red light in the sky vanished and the sun set, leaving Ardram standing alone on the stone with a white rose in his hand.

"Where is the Queen?" roared the mob.

"I don't know," cried Ardram, looking at the white rosebud in a bewildered manner; "she is gone."

"He wants to be King alone," cried the people, "and has made the Queen disappear by magic."

"No, no," said Ardram. "I love her too much for that."

"Kill him! kill him! he's a magician!" yelled the people, and they all pressed forward to tear Ardram off the stone, but, seeing his danger, he jumped down and ran into the church, closing the great doors after him. There he was safe, for the mob dared not to break into the church, but all night roared round it like a stormy sea round a little boat.

The King and Queen left the window, and told the gruff doctor all about the enchantment of the Rose-Princess, which he was now inclined to believe, as he had seen her disappear so suddenly before his eyes. He recommended the Queen to call on the Faery Rosina, which she did, and in a moment the faery, a tall, beautiful woman, in a robe of shining green, was standing before them. Then the doctor did believe in faeries, because he now really saw one for the first time, and was much astonished.

"Well, are you sorry you lost your throne?" asked the faery severely.

"Very," said the King and Queen together.

"If you go back, will you rule wisely?" she said, looking at them.

"We will rule just as we ruled before," they replied.

"Then you are not fit to go back," said Rosina sadly. "I see I have not cured you after all."

"Nonsense!" said the King.

"Pooh!" said the Queen, and they both thought the faery was very rude.

"I'll settle everything to-morrow morning," said the faery, quite angry at their folly. "I can do nothing till the Rose-Princess becomes a woman again—she will of course marry the Prince Ardram to break the spell."

"Is he really the Prince?" asked the King and Queen together.

"Yes, he is," retorted the faery shortly, and then vanished, leaving them quite disconsolate, as they thought they would never get back their throne.

Meanwhile Ardram walked up and down the dark church all night, listening to the roaring of the crowd outside, and wondering how the Princess kept vanishing and appearing so strangely. He was more in love with her than ever, and at last went fast asleep on the altar steps, dreaming about his lovely bride, who said he would rule as King with her. The rosebud lay on the steps beside him, but Ardram never thought for a moment that his charming Princess was so near him.

Next morning he awoke in the early grey dawn, before the sun was up, and found himself surrounded by the King, the Queen, Dr. Mux, his mother, now looking strong and well,

and a beautiful tall woman, in a green robe, with a wand made of white roses.

"I am the Faery Rosina," she said to him in a low, sweet voice, "and I am come to put things to rights, Prince Ardram."

"Why do you call me 'Prince' Ardram?" asked the student, looking puzzled.

"The Rose-Princess will tell you," said the faery, smiling.

"But where is she?" asked Ardram, looking around.

"There," said the faery, pointing with her wand to the white rosebud, which lay on the floor where Ardram had flung it the previous night.

"Impossible!" he said in astonishment.

"Not at all," cried the King, coming forward; "nothing is impossible to a royal princess. That rosebud is my daughter."

"Given to the King and Queen by me," said Rosina sweetly. "They did not know how to rule, and as I knew this revolution would take place, I wanted to provide an heir to the throne."

"But the white rose cannot reign," said Ardram, rather bewildered.

"Not now, but wait till the sun rises," cried the fairy. "Ah, here is the first yellow beam! Now look."

Every one looked at the white rosebud lying on the floor, and then a yellow beam which struck through a painted window, creeping nearer and nearer till it shone on the white bud. In an instant that vanished, and in its place stood the Rose-Princess, looking tall and beautiful. On seeing Ardram, she bounded towards him and put her arms round his neck.

ON SEEING ARDRAM SHE BOUNDED TOWARD HIM AND PUT HER ARMS ROUND HIS NECK

"Good morning, my Prince," she said sweetly.

"But I am no prince," cried Ardram, clasping her to his breast.

"Yes, you are," said the Rose-Princess merrily; "you are the great-grandson of the King who was deposed."

"Is this true, mother?" asked Ardram.

"Perfectly true," she replied, producing the crown. "Here is the royal crown; you are the real King, but I did not dare to tell you till the Faery Rosina gave me permission."

"And I waited till now because I wanted you to marry the Princess Rose," said the faery, as Ardram placed the crown on his head. "The Princess is enchanted, and turns into a rose every night, so in order to break the spell she must marry you."

"When?" asked both lovers together.

"Now," said the faery, and, touching Ardram's dress, it changed into beautiful royal robes all of gold, and at the same moment the Rose-Princess appeared dressed in wedding garments, with her crown of silver and diamonds on her head. The organ rolled out a bridal march, and the priests came forth in a long procession. In a few minutes the Princess Rose was married to Ardram, and then her silver crown rolled off.

"You must not wear silver any more," said the faery, "because the spell is now broken, and you will never change to a rosebud again."

So saying, she touched the Rose-Princess's head with her wand, and immediately there appeared a beautiful golden crown, as gorgeous as that worn by Ardram.

"Now you are King and Queen," said Rosina graciously, "so you will go to the palace and govern wisely."

"Oh yes, we will," cried the new King and Queen joyfully and then they kissed one another as they stood in their royal crowns and splendid garments before the great altar.

"But what is to become of us?" said the old King and Queen.

"You are not fit to govern," said the faery severely, "and only care for pleasure, so you will go away to the other end of the kingdom, to a city of your own, where the people are as fond of pleasure as you are, and there you will be happy."

"Nonsense!" said the King.

"Pooh!" replied the Queen.

Nevertheless, both of them were secretly very delighted, as they would now be able to enjoy themselves as they pleased. Then the faery ordered the doors of the cathedral to be thrown wide open, the organ played a triumphal march, and the new King and Queen walked slowly down the church, looking the handsomest couple in the world. The gruff doctor and the old mother followed, but the deposed King and Queen had vanished with the Faery Rosina, who transported them to their own city, where they ruled and enjoyed themselves for many years.

Then all the people in the city saw the new King and Queen standing before them with their royal crowns, and the bells rang, the streets were made clear again, and as the young couple moved through the crowd, which strewed flowers before them, the people cried,—

"Long live King Ardram and Queen Rose!"

And the Rose-Princess never changed into a flower again, but became a true, loving wife to the King, who ruled well and wisely, for he had seen the hardships of his subjects when he was a poor student. They reigned long and happily, and had many children, but in all their prosperity the Queen never forgot how she had been an enchanted Rose-Princess.

ONE BRIGHT SUMMER'S NIGHT A NUMBER OF FAERIES FLEW INTO THE ROOM

SORROW-SINGING

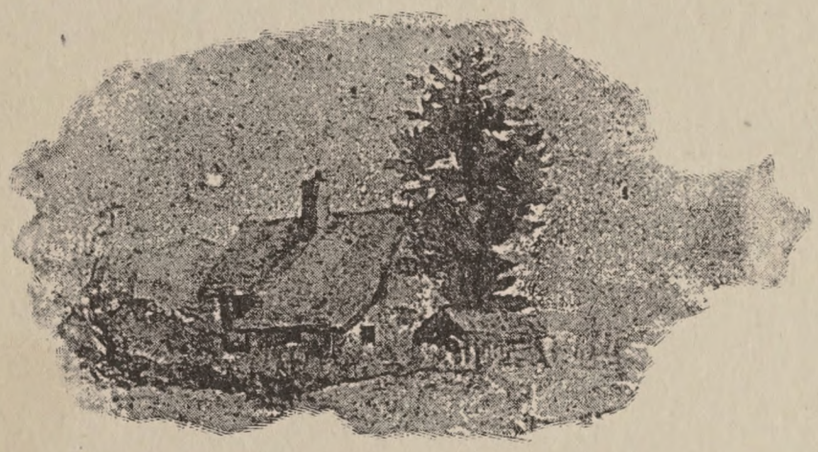
THERE was once a poor woman who lived in a little village many, many years ago, when the world was much younger than it is now, and when the destinies of mortals were often controlled by the faeries. This woman, whose name was Eldina, had lost her husband, who had fallen in a great battle while fighting the enemies of his king, and a month after she heard of his death, Eldina became the mother of a beautiful little son, which event was a great comfort to her.

The truth was that, seeing she was so miserable and lonely since the death of her husband, the kind faeries had given her this little baby to cheer her heart, and when it was born they took it under their own special protection. It was necessary to inform Eldina of this, so one bright summer's night a number of faeries flew into the room where the child was lying and stood in a circle round the cradle.

Eldina was engaged in some household work, but having faery blood in her veins, she had a very delicate sense of hearing,

and immediately knew by the rustle of the faeries' wings that they had arrived. She made herself neat and clean to do honour to her illustrious visitors, and went into the room to hear what they had to say about the child.

The cradle was quite covered with the most lovely flowers, which the enchantments of the faeries had caused to bloom on the brick floor of the cottage, and in the centre of the exquisite blossoms slept the smiling baby, on whose face shone a bright moonbeam.



"Eldina," said the Faery Titania, who is Queen of the Faeries, "we have come to bestow our gifts upon your child, whom we have taken under our special protection—is there any gift you would like him to possess?"

"Yes, your Majesty," cried Eldina eagerly; "the gift of happiness."

All the faeries looked grave at this request, and a sigh sounded through the room, while Titania gazed sadly on the child.

"We cannot give happiness," she said sorrowfully. "Every mortal can only find happiness in his own actions, but we will do the best we can—I will give the child the gift of song, which is the greatest of all gifts."

So saying, she touched the child's lips with her wand, and retired, while the Faery Laurina stepped forward with a wreath of laurel leaves.

"I give this child the gift of fame," she said, placing the laurel wreath on the baby's head; "his songs will make him famous throughout the world."

"From me he receives the gift of beauty," cried another faery, whose name was Venusina.

"From me the gift of wisdom," said the Faery Mirvenetta.

"From me the gift of a kind heart," observed a smiling fay, who had kind blue eyes.

Then all the other faeries bestowed their gifts in turn—wealth, honour, grandeur, cleverness, strength. Everything that human beings most desire was given to this lucky baby, on whom the name of Lanis was now bestowed by the universal voice of all the faeries present.

"All these are beautiful gifts," said Eldina, weeping, although she half smiled through her tears, "but they do not bring happiness."

"They bring happiness if wisely used," cried Titania.

"Then give him the power to use them wisely," pleaded the poor mother.

"We cannot—we cannot," sighed the faeries; "the power rests with himself."

"Will he never find happiness?" cried Eldina in despair.

"Yes, when he arrives at the Kingdom of Shadows, and enters it through the golden gate."

"But how will he find the golden gate?"

"By being a good man. If he misuses his gifts and becomes wicked, he will go through the iron gate into the Kingdom of Fire."

Then the beams of the moon grew brighter, until the whole

chamber glowed with silver light, and the faeries commenced to dance gracefully round the cradle, singing this song, while the baby Lanis slept peacefully, with the crown of green laurel leaves on his head :

"Great blessings on thy head will fall,
In this thy natal hour ;
But ah ! the greatest gift of all,
We have not in our power.

We give thee wealth, we give thee fame,
We give thee hate of wrong,
The splendour of an honoured name,
The mighty power of song.

These gifts are idle as the wind,
Tho' by them thou art blest,
Unless thro' seeking thou canst find
The gift we deem the best."

Then all the faeries melted away in the thin moonshine, the blooming flowers vanished through the floor, the laurel wreath disappeared from the baby's head, and Eldina almost thought that she had been dreaming.

She had not been dreaming, however, as she soon found out, for, as the years rolled by, and Lanis grew up into a tall, handsome boy, he became the wonder of the countryside, owing to his beautiful voice and his marvellous songs. Eldina had found a golden lyre left by the faeries when Lanis grew old enough to play it, and with this in his hand he was accustomed to wander about the country singing his lovely melodies. All the country folk used to make Lanis sing to them at their merrymakings, but when he lifted up his voice, the dancers would cease to dance, the

talkers to chatter, and they would sit with awestruck faces listening to the wonderful stories he told them.

It was a curious thing that, in spite of what the faeries had said about not giving him the gift of happiness, the lad's songs were of the most joyous description, and made the hearts of all rejoice. Eldina was delighted at this, as she thought Lanis would now be happy, in spite of the prophecy of the faeries, when at one merrymaking she heard an old man say,—

"Ah, he sings fine, no doubt; but he'll sing better when his heart is broken."

"What do you mean?" she asked in great dread.

"Joy-singing is beautiful," replied the old man, "but sorrow-singing is better; your lad knows nothing of the bitterness of life, and sings like a delighted child. Wait till he breaks his heart, and he will be a famous singer indeed."

"But will he be happy?" she asked quickly, as the old man turned to go.

"No: genius is the gift of heaven, but it always brings sorrow to its possessor; the laurel wreath is a sign of honour, but the leaves are bitter."

Eldina looked steadily into the eyes of the old man, and saw that he was a faery who had come to warn her of approaching sorrow. She strove to detain him and learn more, but the faery had vanished, and her hands only grasped the rags of a scarecrow which stood in the fields.

That night she died, and Lanis, who was deeply attached to her, wept bitterly as they buried her under the cool green turf. Before she died, Eldina called him to her bedside, and told him all about the faeries, bidding him wander through the world and

seek the one gift which they could not bestow. Lanis wept, and although he could not understand what she meant, still a vague idea of her real meaning came to him as he sat by her grave under the silent stars and sang a farewell. There was a note in his voice which had not been there before, and the simple people in the village awoke at midnight to hear his sad voice float through the still air of the summer's night.

"It is sorrow-singing," they said to one another. "Lanis will never be happy again."

And they were right, for Lanis now started to wander through the world and find out how cruel and hard it can be to those who have sensitive souls and childlike faith. He was full of belief in human goodness and kindness of heart, for he had received nothing else but kindness in his country home; but now his mother was dead, the spell was broken, and he set forth to find the gift of happiness.

Many months he wandered, singing his songs, sometimes sad, sometimes joyful, but in all there sounded the weary note of longing for what he was seeking.

"Where can I find happiness?" he asked an old beggar who lay by the wayside.

"In the Kingdom of Shadows," replied the old man, without raising his eyes.

So Lanis pursued his weary way over mountains, plains, and seas, always asking his one question, and always receiving the same answer.

Once he came to a great city, and sang in the streets so beautifully of the green country and silver moonlight, that all the tired citizens crowded around to hear. A man who was

among the crowd came up to him as he ceased his song and touched him on the sleeve.

"Come with me," he said eagerly, "and I will make you rich."

"I don't want to be rich," replied Lanis.

"That is a foolish thing to say," said the man, who had a crafty face; "gold is the finest thing in the world."

So oily was his speech that he persuaded Lanis to come with him, and took him to a great hall to sing, where he stood at the door himself, making the people pay broad gold pieces to hear this wonderful poet who sang about such noble things. Lanis felt a longing for wealth in his heart, and sang about the power of gold to make or mar life, of the good it could do, of the evil that arose through its misuse; and all the people in the hall, mostly fat, wealthy merchants, chuckled with delight.

"Ah! this is a sensible fellow," they said to each other; "he sings about sensible things."

"I think his song about the beautiful green woods was finer," sighed a poor boy who listened outside, but then no one took any notice of such a silly observation.

When Lanis had done singing, he came out of the hall, and found the man who had tempted him with wealth sitting before a table heaped high with gold.

"Is all that mine?" asked Lanis in a breathless tone.

"All that yours!" echoed the man in an indignant voice; "no, indeed—it's my money—here is your share," and he pushed two pieces of gold towards Lanis out of the great heap.

"But I earned it," said Lanis indignantly; "I earned it with my voice."

"And did I do nothing?" cried the man angrily. "Do you think I can give my time and services to you for nothing? I should think not. If I hadn't put you into this hall to sing, and charged for people to hear you, why, you would have been singing for nothing in the streets, instead of getting two gold pieces."

"But you have a hundred gold pieces."

"Of course—that's my share."

"I did half the work, and I ought to have half the money."

"Not at all," replied the man, putting the gold in his pocket; "if you wanted half you should have said so before you sang."

"But I trusted you," cried Lanis.

"More fool you," retorted the man carelessly; "but I saw you were a fool when you sang."

"You are doing a wicked thing."

"It's only business," shrieked the man; "you ought to be pleased at my giving a beggarly poet like you anything, instead of trying to steal the money I've worked for so hard."

Then the man ran about the city telling all the people that he had done a great kindness to Lanis, and been shamefully treated for doing so. All the citizens, who quite agreed with the man's way of doing business, fell upon Lanis, and, driving him out of the city, shut their gates against him.

In this way, therefore, did Lanis gain his first experience of the world's unkindness when there is any question between right and might. Picking up his lyre, he walked on, leaving the city

wherein he had been so cruelly deceived far behind him, and as he went he sang sadly:

"In the school of life
Is the lesson taught,
That with harshest strife
Is our knowledge bought.

We are bought and sold
In our joy and grief;
I have lost my gold,
I have lost belief.

Ah, by cruel Fate
We are onward led;
I have learned to hate,
And my faith is dead."

Lanis certainly should not have sung so bitterly when such a beautiful world bloomed around him; after all, being deceived by one man does not mean that every one else is as cruel; but then Lanis was very sensitive, and the unjust way in which he had been treated made him very sad, so that all his songs now spoke but of the sorrows of life and the sadness of despair.

As he wandered on for many months in this dismal mood, he met with many adventures, but, alas! nothing which could give him back his former childlike belief in human kindness, and he was very anxious to get to the Kingdom of Shadows and find once more his lost happiness.

Once he came to a great city which was the capital of a very rich kingdom, and here found the citizens in a state of great dismay, for their King, whom every one loved, had gone out of his mind. No one could cure him of his madness, so it had been proclaimed

that whomsoever should do so would become the husband of the lovely Princess Iris, who was the King's daughter. Lanis saw the Princess, and she was so beautiful that he at once fell deeply in love with her, and, forgetting all his former experience of ingratitude, he thought that if he cured her father, she would grow to love him, and he would thus discover his happiness without looking any more for the Kingdom of Shadows.

With this idea he went to the royal palace of the King, and there told the Lord High Chamberlain that he would cure the mad monarch by the power of song. The Lord High Chamberlain did not believe much in what Lanis said, still he was anxious that every means should be tried to cure the King, so let Lanis go into the dark room where he was sitting.

The King was a noble-looking old man, who looked very sad and sorrowful, but Lanis saw at once that he was not really mad, but sad and despondent, owing to the treachery and unkindness he had found upon every hand. His dearest friends had betrayed him, his subjects were rebellious, and the poor King so despaired of ever making his people wise and noble that he had thus fallen into this

deeply sorrowful state which the Lord High Chamberlain mistook for madness.

Lanis ordered the curtains of the great window to be drawn aside, and, when the bright sunlight streamed in through the painted glass, he sat down in the centre of all the gorgeous colours, and, taking his lyre, began to sing of noble deeds in order to rouse the despairing King from his lethargy:

"The world is fair
With beauty rare,
Then why despair,
Oh monarch great?
He is not wise
Who never tries
Sublime to rise
O'er adverse Fate.

The summer flowers
Re-bloom in bowers,
Tho' winter's hours
May kill with frost.
Beneath the sun
As quick years run;
All thou hast done
Is never lost."

The King lifted up his head as he heard these comforting words, and looked at the noble face of the minstrel, for the silvery song bade him not despair, although no good appeared to come of all his work; and Lanis, seeing a ray of hope beam in the King's eyes, went on singing joyfully:

"Put on thy crown,
And boldly frown
Thy sadness down,
Tho' keen the smart.

Thy burden take
Of office great,
And rule the State
With dauntless heart.

A coward he
Who thus would flee
Despairingly,
In time of need.
Tho' evils lurk
In darkness murk,
Resume thy work—
Thou wilt succeed."

Then the King, whose face now was shining with hope and strong resolve, put on his royal crown, took his golden sceptre in his hand, and went forth to take his seat upon the throne to do justice to his subjects.

"Thou art a wise youth," said he to Lanis, "and thy words are noble. It is foolish to desert one's post when there is work to be done, and I will not forget thy rebuke. Now, thou wilt stay with me and marry my daughter."

Lanis was only too glad to do so, for he now loved the Princess with all his might, but, seeing her leave the great feast which the King had given in honour of his recovery, he followed her secretly, and found her weeping.

"Why do you weep, beautiful Princess?" he asked.

"Because I have to marry you," said Iris sadly, "and I love another."

Lanis felt a pang at his heart as she said this, and on turning round saw a handsome young man holding the beautiful Princess in his arms.

"Do you love one another?" asked Lanis, with tears in his eyes.

"Yes; it would be death for us to part," they both replied.

Then Lanis saw that once more he had failed to find happiness, but still it was in his power to bestow it upon others, so he took the Princess and her lover to the old King, and obtained his consent to their marriage. The lovers thanked him heartily, and after Lanis saw them married, he once more started away to wander through the world. The King offered him gold and jewels to stay, but Lanis refused.

"Gold and jewels are good things," he said sadly; "but happiness is better, therefore I go to find it."

"And where will you find it?" asked the King.

"In the Kingdom of Shadows," answered Lanis, and he departed, singing his sorrow-song:

"Ah me, what treasure
To taste the pleasure
Of love's caress.
Oh, idle lover,
Wilt thou discover
Heart's happiness.

Nay! folly this is;
I gain no kisses
From sweet Princess.
Of him she's fonder,
So forth I wander
In sad distress."

It would take a long time to tell how many adventures Lanis met with in his wanderings through the world. The years rolled by, and he travelled onward, never pausing, always hoping to find happiness, but, alas! no one could tell him where to look for the Kingdom of Shadows, and he seemed farther off his object than when he set forth. He freed many princesses from the durance of cruel magicians, but though they all thanked him for his kindness, they loved some one else, and he found no one in the world who cared at all about him. He was honoured far and wide for his gift of song, and did much good in all lands, but no one loved him for himself, and although he was the cause of happiness to others, he never felt happiness in his own heart.

At last, after many years of weary travel, when he had grown a white-haired old man, with bent form and sad heart, he found himself on the shore of a great sea, beyond which he knew lay the most wonderful countries. A boat was rocking on the waves near the shore, so Lanis determined to sail over this mysterious ocean, and thought that perhaps far away in the darkness he might find the Kingdom of Shadows, for which he had sought so long and ardently. He knew that if he once sailed over this ocean, he would never be able to return to earth again, so he sang a last farewell to the beautiful world wherein he had done so much good, and then stepped into the boat.

It was a fairy boat, and moved rapidly onward over the waves without sails or oars. The mists gathered thickly round him and hid the green shore from his view, so sitting in the boat he saw nothing but the grey sky above, the grey mists around, and beneath him the cruel black waters. He was not afraid, how-

ever, for he knew he had done no harm, and, seizing his harp, sang his last sorrow-song:

"Grey mist around me,
Grey sky above me;
Sorrow hath crowned me—
No one will love me.

Brave spirit, quail not;
All will be bright yet.
At thy fate rail not;
God will make right yet.

Still do thy duty,
Tho' all deceive thee,
Splendour and beauty
Now will receive thee."

As he sang the last words, the strings of his lyre snapped with a loud crash, and, leaping out of his nerveless hands, it fell into the grey waves of the sea. Lanis did not grieve, for he now knew he was done with his sorrow-singing for evermore, and as the boat sailed onward he saw a red glow to the left.

"That is the gate of iron," he whispered to himself, "it leads to the Kingdom of Fire. Ah! I would never find any happiness there."

The waves were foaming angrily round the little boat, and the red glare from the open portals of the iron gate looked like an angry sunset, but still Lanis felt no fear. After a time the red glare died away, and now on every side of him was a soft golden light, while the waves beneath the boat were of a delicate blue, and the sky above of the same soft tint. Lanis looked around, and saw a soft green shore, to which his boat drifted

gently, and he sprang out on to the yellow sand of the beach. As he did so, his travel-worn clothes fell off him, and he found himself arrayed in a long white robe.

A tall man, also in a white robe, approached, and, smiling gently on Lanis, gave him a golden harp.

"Is this my old harp?" asked Lanis, taking it.

"No; it is better than the old harp."

"Is it for sorrow-singing?"

"Nay; it is for songs of joy."

"And is this Faeryland?"

"Nay; it is a nobler place than Faeryland."

"Is it The Kingdom of Shadows?"

"So we called it on earth, but now we know it as the Kingdom of Eternal Light."

Lanis looked at the tall man as he said this, and saw it was the old king he had helped—now no longer old and frail, but in the prime of life.

"You are the King!" he cried gladly.

"Yes, I was the King. You pointed out my duty to me, and I did it; otherwise I never would have reached here."

"And the Princess?"

"Is quite happy," replied the King. "She rules my realm with her husband, and both are wise."

"Have you found happiness?" asked Lanis.

"Yes!—and so will you, when you strike your harp," answered the King.

Lanis struck the golden strings of his harp, and immediately all his weariness and sorrow passed away, and he felt glad and joyful. At the sound of the music, he changed from an old

man into a noble-looking youth—the same Lanis who had sung to the King.

"Ah, I have indeed found happiness,' he cried; "but still, I feel I want something more."

"I know what you want," said the King. "Look!"

And Lanis, looking up, saw his mother, with a calm expression of joy upon her face, coming towards him, with outstretched arms. All the white-robed spirits around struck their golden harps and sang the most beautiful songs that were ever heard, while mother and son embraced, and far off the palace of the great King shone like a bright star.

Lanis also struck his harp, and, with the earthly monarch and his mother, went singing onward through the lovely fields, to kneel before the King, who had thus drawn him onward, through sorrow and sadness, to find his happiness at length in the land which we mortals call the Kingdom of Shadows but which wise men know as the Kingdom of Eternal Light.

THE GOLDEN GOBLIN

I.

RING MAGIC.

KELCH was a handsome young man who lived in a little village which was near a great black forest, and he thought himself the most miserable being in the world. It was very curious that he should do so, for he was young, good-looking, and healthy, but he did not value any of these gifts, because he was in love with Filina, the prettiest girl in the whole country, and her father wanted her to marry a very rich man called Hocky, for whom she did not in the least care.

Now Filina was also in love with Kelch, and hated the idea of marrying ugly old Hocky, but, as he was rich and Kelch poor, her father would not let her wed as she wished. Kelch had a little cottage near the wood, which had been left to him by his mother, and earned his livelihood by cutting firewood, which, to be sure, was not a very aristocratic occupation. Still, in those days people did not care much for rank, and pretty Filina loved

Kelch tenderly in spite of his humble calling. She nearly wept her eyes out when her father said she was to become the bride of Hocky. He was an avaricious old dwarf who only cared for gold, and wanted to marry Filina, not for her beauty, but because he knew she would some day be left money when her father

died. When Kelch heard of the proposed marriage, he went to Filina's father and told of his love, but the cruel parent laughed at his request.

"You marry my daughter!" he said mockingly. "What an idea!—you can give her no money."

"But I can give her love," said Kelch sturdily, "and that is much better than money."

"I don't think so," retorted Filina's father. "Any one can make love, but few can make money, so go back to your wood-cutting, and don't come to me with such silly requests."

"Is there no chance for me?" cried Kelch in despair.

"Yes—one," answered the old man mockingly. "Become as rich as Hocky, and you shall marry my daughter."

Poor Kelch went away with tears in his eyes, because old Hocky was known to be very wealthy, and how could an unknown youth hope to become rich when he had no one to help him? It was no good feeling sad, however, for sorrow would not help him to win Filina, so Kelch determined to go to the castle of the Wicked Baron who lived in the centre of the forest, and ask him to make him a present of some gold.

The Wicked Baron was a famous miser, and his castle was said to be full of gold, so, in spite of his bad character, Kelch thought he would not refuse to give him a little out of his plenty. So early one morning, after saying good-bye to Filina, he went into the forest to search for the Wicked Baron's castle, and ask its owner to give him some gold.

Kelch wandered deeper and deeper into the forest, which became wilder and more savage as he advanced, but still he did not come across the looked-for castle. Night was coming on, and the wood was full of sombre shadows, while behind the trees flushed the fierce red light of the setting sun. It was a faery forest, and all the ground was covered with soft grass, and strange flowers which only bloomed at night-time; while overhead the nightingales sang most deliciously in the trees,

and at intervals the wise owls hooted in the most unexpected manner.

As it was now quite dark, Kelch thought he would sleep under a great oak tree until the morning, and then once more set out upon his travels; so he ate some food he had brought with him, drank from a stream which sparkled by, and after saying his prayers,—for he was a good lad,—rested his head upon his knapsack and went fast asleep.

In the middle of the night, however, he woke suddenly under the influence of enchantment, for the whole of the forest was flooded with the silver moonlight, and on every side the faeries were holding their revels. Having drank of the waters of the brook, Kelch had come under the charm of faery power, and, to his surprise, was able to understand the talk of two elves who sat chattering to one another on the broad white cup of a lily.

"Who is this youth lying asleep?" asked the first elf, never thinking for a moment Kelch was awake, and only kept his eyes closed in order to hear what they had to say.

"He is called Kelch," said the other elf, "and loves Filina, who is to marry old Hocky. He is now searching for the castle of the Wicked Baron, to ask for gold."

"He'll never find it," observed the first faery, "unless he asks the Owl who lives in the oak tree under which he sleeps."

"Then I will ask the Owl," cried Kelch, sitting up, whereupon both faeries flew away in great alarm, much to his regret, as he wanted to make inquiries about the Owl.

He looked up at the tree, but could see nothing save the branches interlaced against the clear sky, and now and then a gleam of moonlight on the rough bark of the trunk. As Kelch

had often heard that song was the only way to invoke faeries, he thought he would try the same means with the owl. So, springing to his feet, he began to sing, making up the words as he went along :

"Fairy Owl,
Clever fowl,
Please tell me
Where to see
The castle old,
Where Baron bold
Hoards up his gold."

The words were not very good, but they told exactly what he wanted to know, and the Owl put her head out of a hole in the tree with a wild hoot, her eyes glowing red like burning coals.

"Go away, boy," croaked the Owl angrily, "and do not disturb me in my grief. The Baron is dead, and I am in mourning for him."

"The Baron dead!" cried Kelch in dismay. "Oh dear! then I won't be able to get any gold. I don't know, though—he can't have taken his gold with him, so it must be there still. Owl!—Owl!—where's the castle?"

The Owl hooted crossly, and then replied :

"Follow the brook
To open ground,
Then upward look,
And all around.
Jump water cold,
Then you will see
The castle old
Frown o'er the lea."

The Owl drew back her head into the hole, and Kelch, taking her advice, followed the windings of the brook through the forest. There never was such a winding brook ; first it twisted one way, then another, curled round trees, hid under rocks, fell down precipices in sheets of foam, and even flowed up a gentle incline. At last it began to grow straighter, and finally led Kelch into a wide open glade girdled with trees, but flowed directly in front of him, so that, in order to reach the glade, he would have to cross it.

"I don't see any castle," said Kelch to himself; "but then the Owl said, 'Jump water cold,' so if I cross this brook, which evidently renders the castle invisible, I will see it."

As soon as he made up his mind to do this, he jumped over, and, on landing safely on the opposite bank, saw before him a great castle, with many towers all overgrown with ivy. So Kelch was right, the brook rendered the castle invisible, and unless he had jumped across it he would have seen nothing.

Kelch saw no lights in the castle, but, being a brave lad, he did not mind that, so marched boldly forward, climbed up a broken-down flight of steps leading to the front door, and, finding it open, entered. It was all dark inside, but Kelch had a bit of candle in his pocket, and, having lighted it, he set out to explore the castle, which was evidently quite deserted.

He wandered through room after room, all of which were quite empty, and inhabited by nothing but spiders, there not even being a rat. The moonlight streamed into the lonely halls through the painted glass of the windows, and filled them with strange shadows, but Kelch, knowing that he had done no

one harm, was not afraid, and began singing to keep up his spirits:

"Thro' lonely halls,
Wander, wander;
The moonlight falls
Yonder, yonder;
Tho' dark appals,
Ponder, ponder.

Sad thoughts arise,
Weary, weary;
The night-wind sighs,
Dreary, dreary;
I hear strange cries,
Eerie, eerie."

And indeed he did hear strange cries, sometimes like the roaring of wild beasts, then shrill sounds like the piping of winds upon sandy beaches, sometimes a cry of pain, and at time as burst of wild laughter. In order to protect himself, he drew his hunting-knife from his girdle, and went in the direction from whence the noises proceeded. When he did this, he found himself descending the stairs, and thought he must now be going to the cellars where the Wicked Baron kept his gold. The noises grew louder and louder as he descended, and at last all dwindled down to one harsh voice, which was singing this song:

The Goblin Golden
Here you will find;
From ages olden
I've ruled mankind.

Another victim
I now will bind;
When I have tricked him
He'll sorrow find."

Kelch had by this time come to the end of a long dark passage, and was stopped by an iron door, under which gleamed a line of bright yellow light. He knocked, then suddenly with a loud crash the door flew open, and he saw before him a circular room illuminated with the bright yellow light. In the centre was a great pile of gold coins, on the top of which was seated a funny little man.

Such a queer figure he was, with a great fat body like a bag of money tied round the top with a golden cord, so that it made a ruffle for his neck, and above this was an enormous head with two fierce yellow eyes, a great beak of a nose, and a wide mouth, which when open showed long golden teeth. He had short little legs, with long peaked shoes of gold, and in his hands held a golden sceptre, while on top of his great head of yellow hair was a huge crown of heavy gold set with flashing diamonds. He had a yellow skin and yellow clothes, — in fact, he was yellow all over, and he sat cross-legged on the top of the heap of gold, grinning and nodding at Kelch till the diamonds in his crown glittered like great stars.

"I am the Golden Goblin," he cried in a harsh voice, when he saw the lad, "and I know what you come for, so take as much gold as you like and go."

"But where is the Wicked Baron?" asked Kelch.

"He has gone to my kingdom below," said the Goblin, grinning; "he was my servant, and had as much gold as he

"I AM THE GOLDEN GOBLIN," HE CRIED IN A HARSH VOICE

wanted, on condition he came with me when he died, so he did die last year, and I've got him safe in my kingdom."

Kelch's hair arose on end at this, so wicked did the Goblin look, but as he had done no harm, he was not afraid.

"Can I take some gold?" he asked; "I want some in order to marry Filina."

"You can take as much gold as you like," replied the Goblin graciously, "on condition that you put this ring on Filina's finger as a present from me."

"Oh, I don't mind that," said Kelch, taking the gold ring held out to him by the Goblin. "Thank you kindly; it will do for a wedding ring."

"Exactly," cried the Goblin, nodding his ugly head; "it will do for a wedding ring. Now, fill your pockets with this gold, and it will do for Filina's dowry."

"But then this gold belongs to the Baron."

"No, it doesn't; he's dead, and it belongs to whomsoever I choose to give it," roared the little man, kicking several pieces across the floor. "All the gold in the world is mine—take as much as you like, and don't say I'm not kind."

You may be sure Kelch did not require a second invitation, and filled all his pockets with money, so that he bulged out all over in the most grotesque manner. While he did so, the Golden Goblin jumped off the heap and danced about the room, singing the queerest songs Kelch had ever heard. When his pockets were quite full, he thanked the Goblin and said good-bye.

"Good-bye," cried the Goblin, as Kelch went to the door, "till I see you again."

"You'll never see me again," returned Kelch, rather annoyed.

"Oh yes, I will," grinned the yellow man, jumping up again on the golden heap. "Don't forget to marry Filina with my ring."

"No, I won't forget," said Kelch; and then the Goblin burst out laughing, while all the gold upon which he was seated commenced to whirl round, until Kelch could not see the little man, but only a gleaming column of gold, which was at first as high as the roof, then sank lower and lower until it disappeared through the floor. Then the yellow light commenced to fade, so Kelch, seeing there was no time to be lost, left the chamber and hurried up-stairs as hard as ever he could.

Feeling very delighted that he had attained his object, he left the castle of the Wicked Baron and jumped across the brook. When he did so, the magic castle disappeared, and Kelch, with the gold in his pockets and the ring upon his finger, followed the windings of the brook until he arrived back at the oak tree.

"Oh, you've got back!" cried the Owl, putting out her head.

"Yes; and I've got the gold, thank you," said Kelch cheerfully.

"Much good may it do you," hooted the Owl, and withdrew her head again.

Kelch thought the Owl was very rude, but as she had done him a great service, he said nothing, but walked through the forest, and on arriving at the outskirts went straight home just as the red dawn was breaking in the east.

During the day he went to Filina's father and gave him all the gold he had obtained from the castle of the Wicked Baron,

upon which the old man was so delighted that he at once gave his consent to the marriage, much to the disgust of Hocky, who was very envious of Kelch's good fortune.

In the evening Filina's father gave a dance on the village green in honour of his daughter's marriage, and while the merrymaking was going on, Kelch took the opportunity to slip the Goblin's ring on Filina's finger. No sooner had he done so, than, to the dismay of every one, the poor girl vanished out of their sight, and Kelch was in despair.

Filina's father was very angry at the disappearance of his daughter, and his rage was further increased by Hocky, who said that Kelch must have promised to give Filina to the Goblin in exchange for the gold. All the villagers believed this malicious story, and drove Kelch from his home with sticks and stones. So the poor lad found himself at last seated once more under the oak tree, having lost Filina, his gold, his home, and his good name.

II.

THE REALM OF GOLD.

It was now night-time once more, and the wood was again full of merry faeries, but Kelch was too much taken up with his own sorrows to notice them, although the pranks they played would have amused the saddest person in the world. However, when things are at their worst they generally begin to mend, as Kelch soon found out, for, while he was lamenting his evil fortune, the

Owl put her head out of the hole in the oak tree and hooted loudly, "Tu-whit! tu-whoo!" Kelch looked up, and, knowing owls to be wise birds, fond of word-twistings, made instant reply.

"True wit I have not owing to my sorrow, and I go not to woo because Filina has been taken from me."

"Very neat indeed," replied Mrs. Owl politely. "I see you have the real court air."

"It must be natural, then," said Kelch, with a sigh, "because I've never been to court."

"Never mind," observed the Owl, nodding her head sagely; "perhaps you will go some day. But why do you sit under my tree and cry?"

"Because I'm so miserable," said Kelch, and thereupon he told the Owl all his troubles in connection with Filina. The Owl listened attentively with her head on one side, and, when he came to the end of his story, wiped her eyes with a dry leaf, for she was a very tender-hearted bird, and felt very sorry for Kelch.

"Ah, that Goblin, I know him well!" she said, when she had recovered from her emotion; "he has carried off my friend the Wicked Baron, who was no more wicked than you, except that he was too fond of gold. Ah, that was his ruin! for if it had not been for his love of money, the Golden Goblin would never have carried him off."

"Why did he carry him off?" asked Kelch.

"Because once a year the Golden Goblin has to make the offering of a human being to the King of Fire, for if he did not, the King of Fire would invade the Realm of Gold, and destroy

the kingdom of the Golden Goblin. He offered the Baron as the last victim, and the next will be Filina."

"Filina!" cried Kelch in a tone of despair. "Oh no, it can't be true."

"It is true—quite true," replied the Owl in a dignified manner. "The ring he gave you is a magic ring, and as soon as it was placed on Filina's finger, she vanished from the earth."

"She did—she did! but where is she now?"

"Down below in the Realm of Gold. To-morrow she will be given up as the bride of the King of Fire."

"Cannot I save her?"

"I don't know," said the Owl reflectively. "If your heart is strong, and you don't feel afraid, perhaps you may."

"Oh, I'm not afraid!" cried Kelch quickly. "Do help me to save her, dear Mrs. Owl—please do!"

"I'll help you to save Filina and punish wicked old Hocky on one condition," said the Owl slowly; "and that is that you never cut down my oak tree yourself, or let any one else cut it down."

"Oh, I'll promise that," answered Kelch earnestly. "Your oak tree will always be safe."

"Then you keep your promise and I'll keep mine," cried the Owl. "Now, first you must get to the Realm of Gold."

"But how?"

"Don't be impatient, and I'll tell you. The way to the Realm of Gold is down the trunk of this oak tree, so if you climb up to my nest, I'll show you how to crawl down.'

"But I'm too big," said Kelch, looking at his sturdy figure.

"Oh, that will be all right; climb up to my nest, and as you climb you'll grow smaller."

Kelch lost no time in obeying Mrs. Owl, and started to climb up the great trunk of the oak tree. As he did so, he found himself shrinking every minute, and when he arrived at the nest he was only two feet high, and able to enter the hole without bowing his head.

The Owl received him very graciously, and showed him her home, which was beautifully furnished with dry grass, and curtains of green moss.

"These are my books," said Mrs. Owl, showing him some dried leaves; "for I read a great deal—it improves my mind. The Faery Minervetta gave me these beautiful volumes."

"They look like dried leaves," observed Kelch.

"To you; yes, because you are a mortal, but I am a faery owl, and can read faery books. However, there's no time to be lost, or Filina will become the bride of the King of Fire, and then I cannot help you. Now, take this phial of water."

"What good will it do?" asked Kelch, putting the phial in his pocket.

"A great deal of good," replied the Owl severely; "all the subjects of the Golden Goblin are mortals who are discontented with their lot, and want gold to buy all sorts of bad things; that phial contains the water of contentment, and if you sprinkle it over the men and women you find in the Realm of Gold, they will grow satisfied with their station in life, and not want any gold; therefore the Goblin will lose all his subjects. When he sees that, he'll soon make terms with you, and then you can demand back Filina."

"I understand," said Kelch; "but how do the men and women get to the Realm of Gold if they are mortal?"

"They go in their dreams," replied the Owl. "When they are awake during the day they live on earth, but at night in their sleep they go down to the Realm of Gold to be the slaves of the Golden Goblin; and, indeed, many of them are his slaves in the day as well as in the night. Now go away at once, or you'll be late."

Kelch thanked the kind Owl, and, going through a little door at the back of the nest, commenced to clamber down the inside of the oak tree trunk, while the Owl resumed her studies.

"I've saved my tree," said the Owl to herself sagaciously; "no one will cut it down now. Ah, there's no doubt I'm really a very wise owl!"

And indeed she was; for she had gained by kindness what she never would have gained by force, which shows that it is best to be gentle in all things if we want to be successful.

Meanwhile, Kelch, being completely in the dark, did not know his way, and in spite of all his care suddenly slipped and fell right down the centre of the tree trunk. However, as he was in Faeryland, he felt no fear, for, indeed, he was falling quite gently, as the air was so heavy, and he was so small and light. Down, down he fell through the darkness, till at last he came bump upon a cushion of moss which was at the foot of the tree. Here there was a faint glimmer of light, and he saw above him the mighty roots of the oak stretching out in all directions like the rafters of a huge hall. His eyes soon became accustomed to the glimmering twilight in which he now found himself, and he looked around to see where he would go next.

Through the misty blue light he espied a small hole which seemed to lead downward in a gentle slope, but it was so dark that he felt rather afraid to enter into it. Suddenly he saw that the misty blue light was caused by the radiance of some decayed wood which lay about, so, catching up a piece, he advanced boldly into the hole, and soon discovered that it gave him sufficient light to see a short distance before him.

Kelch was now in a narrow tunnel, the sides, floor, and roof of which were nothing but rough rock, but as he advanced these commenced to glisten with jewels, until they reflected the light of his decayed wood torch so brightly, that he walked in the centre of a brilliant blaze. At last the passage ended suddenly at a deep hole, up which rushed a current of warm air. There seemed no way of getting down, but Kelch, remembering his experience in the oak tree, never hesitated for a moment, but flung himself boldly into the hole. The warm air bore him up, and he fell gently for a long time, seeing the sides of the hole rushing past him one blaze of light, like a splendid jewel. The air grew hotter and hotter as he fell, until at length he tumbled right into the centre of a heap of gold dust, which made him sneeze dreadfully. All around him was a soft golden light, such as he had seen in the treasure vault of the Wicked Baron; so, throwing away his useless torch, he jumped to his feet and looked about him.

He was now in the middle of a large plain, and could see neither the sides nor the roof of what he thought must be a cavern, as it was below the earth, but only a soft gold mist floating above him, and surrounding him on all sides, while the ground was covered with fine glittering gold dust, in which lay

great rocks and stones of pure yellow gold, gleaming dully in the subdued yellow twilight.

It was truly a wonderful place, and what was more wonderful was, that Kelch now found he had grown again to his natural size; so, very satisfied with everything, he marched along over the plain to look for the Golden Goblin.

For a long time the plain was quite lonely, and then he saw one or two people in the distance; shortly afterwards, some more, until at length he found himself among a great crowd of shadows. Kelch knew they were dream-shadows, although they looked like flesh and blood men and women, and he moved through the dense mass quite unnoticed, so intent were they on their occupations. These consisted in picking up nuggets of gold from the ground and putting them in their pockets; but Kelch noticed that all their pockets had the bottoms cut off, so that when the nuggets were put in, they simply fell through to the ground once more. Some of the shadows wore chains of gold, of which they seemed very proud, and not one person paid any attention to another, but each bent eagerly down gathering up the gold, and putting it into their bottomless pockets. There were old white-headed men, palsied elderly women, men in the prime of life, and beautiful maidens; but all their faces wore the same eager expression, as they clutched the shining gold.

Kelch could not help pitying them as they worked at their fruitless tasks, but he knew they did it of their own free will, so that the work which appeared a pain to him was a pleasure to them.

Suddenly he recollected the phial given to him by the Owl, and, as he did not see anything of the Goblin, pulled it out of

his pocket and began to sprinkle the water of contentment on the avaricious shadows.

Every time a drop fell on one of them, that shadow vanished, and Kelch knew that it had returned to its sleeping body on earth, quite contented with its station in life, and would look no more for gold.

Hundreds of shadows vanished as he sprinkled them with the water of contentment, when all at once a quiver passed through the crowd, and before Kelch had time to wink, the Golden Goblin, with his eyes blazing with rage, stood before him, looking uglier than ever.

"Ho! ho!" cried the Goblin furiously; "it is you who are trying to rob me of my subjects—but I'll give you to the King of Fire. Seize him at once!"

A crowd of grotesque goblins, all very like their master, rushed forward and tried to seize Kelch, but he sprinkled them with the magic water, which burnt like fire, and they all tumbled back in a confused mass. The Golden Goblin stamped with rage, but was afraid to come near Kelch, lest he also should be sprinkled with the water of contentment.

"What do you want?" he shouted, as Kelch paused for a moment. "I told you we would meet again—but what do you want?"

"You know well enough," retorted Kelch coolly. "I want Filina—you stole my Filina from me."

"She's mine now," said the Goblin in a grumbling tone, "and I'm going to give her as a bride to the King of Fire; besides, I paid you well for her—you took a lot of gold."

"Yes, but that was a present," cried Kelch hotly. "I never

said I would let you steal my future wife; I want Filina, not your gold."

"Don't want gold!" said the Goblin in astonishment; "you are the first mortal I ever heard say that."

"I've got no time to talk," observed Kelch, raising the phial, "so if you don't give me back my Filina, I'll leave you without a single subject."

"Stop, stop!" cried the Goblin in consternation; "don't do that. Come with me to my palace, and I will give you back your Filina—on conditions."

"I won't make any conditions," said Kelch, as they walked along; "I want my Filina, and nothing else."

The Golden Goblin grinned angrily at this, but as Kelch had the phial, and could make his subjects vanish, he was afraid to say anything as they glided rapidly along to the palace. It was gliding and not walking, for Kelch found that though his legs did not move, still he seemed to be approaching nearer to the great gold castle in which the Goblin held his court.

It was all built of shining gold, with innumerable towers, and huge windows of diamond glass. There was a great flight of steps leading to the front door, and the Goblin ran up these, followed by Kelch, until at length they came to a great hall with many golden pillars, and an immense domed roof all glittering with jewels.

The Goblin went to the end of this hall, and, having seated himself upon his throne, which was cut out of one gigantic diamond, he offered Kelch a goblet filled with liquid gold.

"I won't drink that," said Kelch, and dashed the goblet out of the little man's hand.

"Just as well you refused," replied the Goblin complacently, pointing to a golden statue that stood near the throne, "or you would have become like that."

Kelch turned to examine the statue, and saw to his grief that it was pretty Filina thus changed. Every hair of her head, every fold of her dress was there, but she was nothing but a stiff golden statue.

"I can't take my Filina back like this," he cried, turning to the Goblin, who sat on his throne grinning at Kelch's sorrow.

"I don't mean you to," retorted the Goblin; "it's far too valuable a statue to give to you."

"Filina is still more valuable."

'Would you rather have Filina than all that gold?"

"Yes, a thousand times!" said Kelch boldly.

The Goblin looked rather discomfited at this, and nodded several times as if puzzled.

"You're too good for me," he observed at length; "I can gain no power over you. But if I give you back Filina, how am I to pay my yearly tribute to the King of Fire? If I don't do it, he will burn all my kingdom to cinders."

"He can't burn it to cinders when it's all gold," cried Kelch; "but can't I find you a substitute for Filina?"

"Ah, that's a good idea!" screamed the goblin, while all his ugly little courtiers jumped with joy at this solution of the problem. "Bring me Hocky, and I'll give you Filina."

"But what will you do to Hocky?" asked Kelch anxiously, for even to rescue Filina he was unwilling to bring harm to any one else.

"I'll give him to the King of Fire."

"But he'll be burnt up."

"Only the bad part of him," said the Golden Goblin; "all that is good in him will not be touched by the fire. When he is quite purified by the fire, he will be allowed to return to earth again, and instead of being a bad man as he is now, he will be very good."

"In that case I don't mind," replied Kelch, much relieved. "But how am I to give you Hocky in exchange for Filina?"

"Oh, that's easily done," said the Goblin, holding out to Kelch a cup filled with some liquor which sparkled like diamonds. "Drink this, and you will be immediately transported back to your cottage. There you will find Filina, who will still be a statue of gold. Get Hocky to pull off the ring that is on her finger and put it on one of his own, then Filina will become flesh and blood once more, and Hocky will vanish."

"Where to?" asked Kelch, taking the cup of diamond water from the Goblin.

"Down here," replied the Goblin, grinning; "then I'll give him to the King of Fire, and when all the bad is burnt out of him, he'll go back to earth again. Come, drink up."

"No tricks," said Kelch, placing the goblet to his lips.

"On the honour of a king," answered the Goblin, placing his yellow hand on his yellow breast; "but be quick, for there's no time to be lost."

So Kelch drained the goblet to the dregs, and as he did so all the golden palace seemed to spin round and round as he fell down on the ground. He knew nothing more that happened

till he woke up, feeling quite bright and gay, when he found himself lying on the floor of his own cottage, and the morning sun shining through the window.

III.

KELCH REGAINS FILINA.

FINDING himself at home, Kelch jumped to his feet with a cry, for at the end of the room he saw the golden statue of Filina standing in the sunlight, with outstretched arms, as if she were imploring him to release her from the enchantment. Kelch hurried forward and saw the magic ring was still on her finger, but it looked too firmly fixed to pull off, and although he tried, he could not get it away. The only thing to be done was to bring Hocky to the cottage and let him try, and as the Goblin had fulfilled his promise of placing both Kelch and the statue at home, the youth had no doubt that everything else would soon come all right.

He hurried out into the open air, and found all the villagers returning from the fields for their noonday meal. They scowled at Kelch as he passed, and asked how a wicked magician like him dared to return to the village from whence he had been driven.

Kelch, however, never minded their anger, but ran to the village green, where he found Hocky talking to Filina's father.

"Here's that wicked magician!" cried Hocky when he saw Kelch, for he hated the youth almost as much as the villagers hated himself. "Drive him away."

"He robbed me of my daughter," said Filina's father, lifting up his staff, as the men and women of the village broke into murmurs of anger.

"I have come back to restore her," said Kelch boldly; "and if you come with me to my cottage, you will find her there."

On hearing this, Filina's father, followed by Hocky and all the villagers, hastened to the cottage, and there they saw the golden statue.

"It is my daughter sure enough!" cried Filina's father, with tears in his eyes; "but she is changed into gold."

"Would you rather have your daughter living, or her golden statue?" asked Kelch, looking at the old man.

"Say the golden statue," whispered Hocky, pulling the father's sleeve.

"No, no!" cried Filina's father, shaking his head; "no gold would recompense me for the loss of my daughter."

"But your daughter is going to marry me," said Hocky.

"Yes, that is true," replied the old man.

"Then I would rather have her as a golden statue," shrieked Hocky avariciously, approaching Kelch.

"You hear what he says!" cried Kelch: "I love Filina for herself, Hocky loves her because she is turned to gold, and would rather see the father unhappy than let her be alive again."

"She's mine," said Hocky rudely, getting in front of the golden statue; "I have her father's word, and all this gold is my own."

"What will you do with her?" asked Filina's father tremulously.

"Melt her down into broad gold pieces," roared Hocky, dancing; "into the furnace she shall go."

"What! melt my daughter!" said the old man in a wrathful tone. "Never! You shall not have her—sooner than that I'll give her to Kelch."

"Keep your promise, and I'll change her into a living woman once more," cried Kelch eagerly. "I love your daughter for her own sake."

"Give me my daughter once more, and you will be her husband," said Filina's father quickly.

"No—no!" yelled Hocky; "the statue is mine—mine!"

"What do you all say?" said Kelch, turning to the villagers. "You drove me from my home because you said I was a magician; now I have brought back Filina, and can restore her to life, so you see I am not so bad as you thought I was."

"You shall be her husband!" cried the villagers; "we believe you to be a good lad."

"If you give him the golden statue, I'll ruin the whole village!" cried Hocky in a rage. "You know I can do it."

And indeed it was the truth, for Hocky had lent the villagers a lot of money, and in return they had given over their lands and houses to him, so he was really owner of the whole place. All the villagers were dismayed at this, and Filina's father began to weep, for he thought he would never hear his daughter's merry voice again, when Kelch spoke.

"I'll restore Filina to life and get rid of Hocky, if you withdraw your accusations of my being a magician."

"Yes, yes!" they all cried; "you are no magician—you are a good man, and shall marry Filina."

"And how will you get rid of me?" asked Hocky, angrily turning to Kelch.

"By giving you more gold than you ever saw before in your life," replied Kelch. "Will you agree to that?"

"Yes, I will," replied Hocky greedily, "if you give me more gold than I've got, and more gold than there is in this statue of Filina."

"Very well," observed Kelch; "in order to see more gold than you ever saw in your life, all you've got to do is to pull that ring off Filina's finger and place it on your own."

"Hurrah!" cried Hocky, turning to the statue. "I'll do it at once."

He pulled the ring off the finger of the statue with the greatest ease, and slipped it on his own with a greedy laugh, when suddenly there was a loud crash like thunder, and Hocky vanished into air, while Filina, once more a bright, laughing girl, hastened forward to kiss her father.

"Where is Hocky?" asked all the villagers, when they had congratulated Filina.

"Gone where he'll never trouble you again," replied Kelch, with a laugh, taking his sweetheart in his arms. "Now, am I to marry Filina?"

"Yes, yes! Hurrah!" every one cried.

Then Filina put on her bridal dress, all the village was decked

with flags, the school children received a half-holiday, and Kelch married his sweetheart that afternoon.

They lived long and happily together, and when Filina's father died, he left them all his property, and the gold Kelch had brought from the castle of the Wicked Baron. Hocky never came back again, which made Kelch think that he must have had a lot of bad in him, as it took such a long time to burn out.

Kelch paid a visit to the oak tree and thanked the kind Owl; when she, hearing that the Wicked Baron's castle was in ruins, left her oak tree and went to live there, where no doubt she is still.

Kelch and Filina lived happily ever afterwards, and had lots of children, to whom their father often told the story of his adventures with the Golden Goblin.

THE ENCHANTED FOREST.

DO not know how long I was in King Oberon's library, as, being very much interested in the books, I took no notice of the flight of time. But reading becomes wearisome even in Faeryland, so, feeling rather tired with study, I lay down beside the marble-encircled pool, and fell fast asleep on the soft green carpet. The delightful stories I had been reading still ran in my head, for my slumber was filled with the most charming dreams. I seemed to see beautiful faces smiling at me from amid masses of golden clouds, long ranges of marble colonnades stretching far away in dazzling whiteness against a dark blue sky, mighty ranges of mountains with snowy summits roseate with the flush of sunsets, and sombre Egyptian temples, wherein lovely priestesses danced their mystic dances before the unseen fane of the sacred Isis. All these wonderful pictures passed through my visionary brain, blending one into the other in inextricable confusion, while strains of the most delicious music kept rising and falling at intervals during this strange phantasmagoria of dreamland.

At length the music grew louder and louder, until I slowly opened my eyes to find myself once more in the enchanted forest, lying on the cool green grass, with the dark blue sky silvered with stars above me, and the thin pale moonlight shining down on the solemn trees and glimmering pool. The music had now words to its melody, for a choir of faery voices, clear and distinct as the sound of tiny silver bells, sang as follows:

"In the moonshine cold and chill,
Nightingale
To the woods so calm and still
Tells her tale.
Dance the fairies one and all
Lightly at the elfin ball,
To her singing's dying fall.

In the moonshine chill and cold,
Oberon
Will the fairy revels hold;
So begone
Mortal, who with daring eye
Elfish dances would espy.
Mocking our solemnity."

After listening drowsily to this song for some time with half-closed eyes, I sat up and saw that the whole glade was alive with faeries all running hither and thither, evidently preparing for the coming of King Oberon. As I had been warned in this song to depart, I did not know very well whether they meant it or not, when suddenly Phancie, now reduced to his former size, appeared before me, and I put the question to him.

"It's not usual to allow any mortal to view our revels," he said thoughtfully; "still, as the King allowed you to see his library, perhaps he will let you stay a little while, so you can wait till he appears."

"Has no mortal ever beheld the faery revels?" I asked, after thanking Phancie for his kindness.

"Yes—one Shakespeare," he answered, nodding his head: "long, long ago the King allowed him to see our solemnity; but he told all about it to the world, which made the King very angry."

"But he told it so beautifully," I pleaded.

"I don't know so much about that," responded Phancie saucily. "He said Oberon and Titania quarrelled, which is quite a mistake, for they are very fond of one another. Oh, I assure you the affair caused quite a scandal at court; since then the King mistrusts all mortals, and won't allow them to see anything."

"Perhaps, then, he'll send me away."

"I can't tell, but it's very probable he will; or perhaps he will let you stay, and then cause you to forget all you have seen, except what he wishes you to remember."

"I hope he won't make me forget the stories I have read."

"No, he won't do that; he said you could remember seven, and he never goes back from his word; but as to remembering our revels, I'm afraid he won't let you do that. But hush! the court is approaching. Go and sit on that fallen tree again."

I arose obediently, and, walking across the glade to the

tree, sat down on it; then, warned by Phancie, kept quite silent.

"You mustn't speak unless the King asks you a question," said Phancie pompously. "If he does, be sure to address him as 'Your Majesty.'"

"I won't forget," I replied, and then Phancie, having seen all was in order to receive the King, skipped off to meet the procession, which was now approaching.

Between two great rose-bushes, which formed a triumphal arch of beautiful red blossoms, came a company of merry little faeries, blowing through white trumpet-shaped lilies, followed by a number of crickets creaking in the most lively manner; then came a band of elves ringing bunches of bluebells, which chimed silver music; next marched some fays dressed in thistle down, playing with blades of grass on drums made of empty acorn cups with rose leaves stretched tightly across them; a company of fierce-looking bumble-bees carrying thorns for swords came next; and then a number of beautiful girl faeries in lily-white dresses danced along, singing gaily. After these appeared Oberon and Titania, riding upon two purple-winged butterflies, and the rear of the procession was guarded by a company of soldier elves, and lastly a disorderly crowd of faeries, who played a thousand merry tricks upon one another as they ran along.

When the King and Queen of Faeryland arrived near the pool, Oberon struck the ground with his magic wand, and immediately there bloomed a great white lily, on the golden cushions of whose heart the royal pair took their seat, while all the faeries disposed themselves around according to their rank,

and the elfin band played merry music, which rang shrilly in the night air. From all sides of the glade now appeared beautiful white rabbits with pink eyes, lithe brown hares, velvety moles, spiky-looking hedgehogs, and many other strange animals, while thrushes, nightingales, linnets, cuckoos, and doves perched among the branches of the trees.

The King and Queen were much taller than their subjects, and Oberon was dressed in a green hunting-suit, with a crown of dewdrops on his head and a silver wand in his hand; while Titania wore a delicate pink robe made entirely of rose leaves, and her golden hair streamed from under a wreath of lilies of the valley, a spray of the same flowers being in her tiny hand.

When the royal pair had taken their seats, a loud-voiced cricket chirped loudly to command silence, and then a wise-looking owl made a very long speech, in which he bade the King and Queen welcome in the name of their dutiful subjects. The King was about to reply, when a grotesque figure with a large head and pointed ears suddenly started up out of the earth, and rolled like a ball to the foot of the throne.

"Ah, my merry Puck!" said Oberon, laughing at the jester of Faeryland; "where have you been?"

"Plaguing mortals, please your Majesty!" cried Puck, bounding on to the top of a great mushroom, where he sat grinning at every one. "I have played Will-o'-the-Wisp on marshy ground to lead unwary wanderers astray; pinched the lazy maids who lie slug-a-bed; frightened those foolish mortals who believe not in faeries; drank the milk, spoiled the butter, teased the cows, and played merry jokes everywhere."

"Ah, rogue!" said Oberon, smiling; "thou wert ever cruel in thy pranks. Some day mortals will punish thee."

"No, no," said Puck, shaking his head; "why, they don't believe faeries exist."

"You hear?" sighed Oberon, looking at me gravely; "you mortals don't believe faeries exist."

"I do, your Majesty," I answered eagerly; "and when I return to earth, I will do my best to convince other people. Besides, sire, children always believe in faeries."

"Yes, the dear children!" cried Titania brightly; "they are our best friends. Ah, children will always believe in us, although they do not see us."

"If you would only show yourselves sometimes," I suggested, "it would make every one believe."

"I don't think so," said Oberon, smiling; "you see your wonderful grown-up people have proved conclusively that there are no faeries, so it would be quite an impertinence for us to appear and upset all their fine theories."

"It might make their hearts better, your Majesty," I ventured to remark.

"I doubt it," replied the King of Faery. "With you it is all greed of money, pursuit of pleasure, and desire of learning; there is no room in your lives to believe that beings like us exist; we can be turned to no practical use, therefore you mortals regard us as unnecessary existences. But while the world moves on, there will always be bright, happy children who will keep our memories fresh and green in their hearts, and perhaps some day, when the world returns to its childlike faith of old, we may once more appear to mortals."

"Meanwhile"—I began.

"Meanwhile," repeated Oberon a little sadly, "you will go back to earth and write down the seven stories you have read in my library; when good children read them they may perhaps find out their hidden meaning, and it will make them wiser and more obedient. Tell your child friends that faeries do nothing without having some good end in view, and if they want to please us, they must try and be noble and good, for there is nothing so hateful in the world as wickedness. And now, mortal, I will permit you to see a faery dance, and then you must leave us for ever."

"For ever?"

"Unless," said the King graciously, "you revisit us in your beautiful dreams. Good-bye, mortal, good-bye:

"Though years may bring thee pain and grief,
In airy elves still have belief,
While thou of earth art denizen.
And may thou ever think as truth
The lovely idle dreams of youth:
This is the Faeries' benison."

Then from the elfin band rang out sweet, wild music, and on the smooth greensward the merry faeries danced lightly in the pale moonshine. They whirled in and out, swayed into graceful circles, and melted away like foam on the crest of an emerald wave, floated in long wreaths which wavered and broke as breaks the mist on snow-peaked mountains, blended together again in picturesque confusion, while sweet and shrill sounded the weird music, blown through the warm air of the summer night. The perfume of a thousand flowers arose from

the ground, strange blossoms bloomed suddenly under the flying feet of the elves, and round and round the lily throne of gracious Oberon and airy Titania whirled the elfin circle, singing their farewell song to the sweet voices of the birds:

"Flashing stars and silver moon
Waning in the western skies;
Crimson is the east, and soon
Will the orb of day arise.

Chilly blows the morning breeze,
Dewdrops glitter on the lawn;
Through the branches of the trees
Flushes now the rosy dawn.

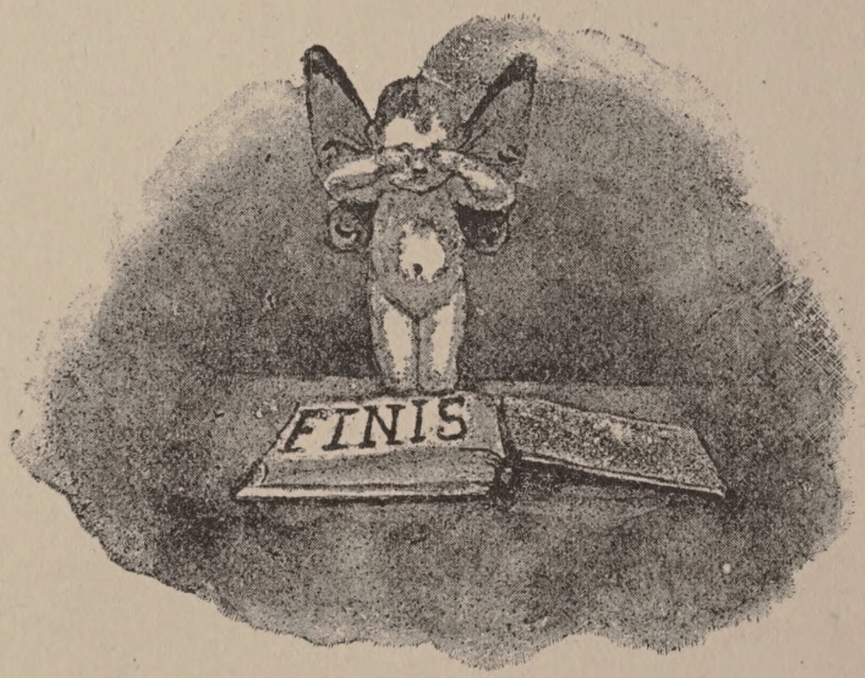
Idle faery dreams have fled,
Not a moment can they wait;
Visions of the night are dead,
Sleep has barred her ivory gate.

But when silver moonlight gleams,
Close your eyes, O poet true,
Then from Faeryland of dreams
We will come again to you."

And through the branches of the trees shone the red glare of the dawn, which seemed to come nearer and nearer. The great boughs with their myriad leaves faded into the angry scarlet, a veil of darkness enveloped me, and, awaking with a start, I found myself seated in my arm-chair in the shadowy room, with the fire burning redly in the grate.

Even the cricket had ceased to sing, and outside the white snowflakes still fell, and the wind whistled shrilly round the house. Was it a dream? Maybe! for it is only in dreams, dear children, that we can ever hope to visit Faeryland, where

dwell all those lovely fancies and beautiful thoughts which form your enchanted world; but the child who has once visited the wonderful realm of gracious Oberon must try never to forget what he has seen, so that, when he becomes a grown-up person, he can remember his childish glimpse of the delightful Kingdom of Faeryland.



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